A Life in Song

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A
LIFE IN SONG

BY

GEORGE LANSING RAYMOND

FOURTH EDITION, REVISED

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The course of one born humble . . .
Who yet attained the end of highest aims
As grand as any land or age e'er sought,
Because his plans when struggling toward the light
Emerged where freemen leave to God and heaven
The right to rule the spirit though on earth.

FINALE: A LIFE IN SONG.

A LIFE IN SONG.

PRELUDE.

"Seven notes make full the gamut.
Some have said
Seven ages make our human life complete ;
And seven has my life known ; and now the dusk
Folds like a pall above my earthly day.
I would not hold too dear this day that goes ;
Yet who, when he has pass'd through ways wherein
His feet have wander'd and been wellnigh lost,
Would leave no words of guidance for his kind ?
And who, when leaving these where heedless ears
Are disenchanted oft of all distaste
By words men chant in verse whose music seems
To pulse and pant like living blood and breath,
Or leave the nervy lines like breezes blown
From silence into song-land, as they cross
Æolian chords ;—who in a world like this

Would not wish all the current of his thought
To flow to speech amid these waves of rhythm ?
More swiftly and more surely thus, perchance,
The truth that wells from him may clear the space
Between his own and other souls, and swell
The stream of truth which flows from each for all.'

So spake, with eyes that fondly sought his works
As mothers' eyes will seek their children's forms,
The man whose care had wrought these tales in song.
Then, turning, sage-like, toward a waiting friend,
He slowly said : " Beneath men's outward lives
There flows a force whose current, sweeping on,
Impels to outward good. But if they start
To gain this good, they oft are driven back ;
And oft then start anew. Through all their lives
They thus may struggle forward, then draw back,
And move now here, now there, and half believe,
Like half the world, that all their deeds are vain ;
Yet must it be that far above this earth,
Where grander progress courses grander paths
Than mortals ever dream of, aims that urge
Men's hope so vainly to and fro below,
Are seen to swing the pendulums that turn
The hands on heaven's high dials to better times.
A life like this, it is, whose changing paths
The feet that tread the measure of my verse

Essay to follow. Would the poet's themes
Themselves were worthier! Then they less might need
The lyre of fancy to give charm to fact:
Enough of sweetness might attend reports
Of footfalls really heard, and deeds perceived,
Impelled by sweet desire."

With words like these,
The dying poet turn'd him on his couch,
Sank back, and fell to rest.
And when, at morn,
Friends came to bear to him his early meal,
They found him still and pale, and by him there
His poems lay, half held in opening hands.
Alone with these embodied thoughts of his,
Prized so because the forms to which so oft
The spirit breathed by him had given its life,
That spirit now had all been breathed away.

Of those who mourned him then, none knew his past,
They scarcely knew his name. Some days before,
With locks and beard as white as was the snow
Blown round him when he came, his trembling frame
Had drifted hither, like a bark to shore;
And here, disabled by the strain and stress

Of many a former tempest, he had stay'd ;
And here, erelong, had found the final port
Of all his earthly voyage.

Nor then had those
Whose friendly doors had open'd for his needs
Been void of their reward. For such a man,
With so much to draw forth from men their best,
Yet so much to impart beyond their best,
These unversed villagers had never seen.
They could but love him ; yet with all their love,
The more they knew him, something made of him
Still more a stranger. All about his life
There hung an atmosphere of mystery.
He seem'd through it to see what they saw not;
And as their hush would heed the rare reports
That reach'd them through the music of his voice,
His thought oft seem'd a spirit's ; none could tell
From whence it came ; nor trace it where it went.

So, when he died, the room in which he died,
And writings left there, seem'd like sacred things
To those whose kindly care had tended him.
Nor would they touch them. "Who can tell," they said,
"If friends of his may come in search of him ?
And when they come, if they be like himself,

They may not like it, if our alien hands
Have made aught seem less his."

And soon it chanced
A friend had come. One morning, with the sun,
A soldier bright with glittering stars and bars
And buttons on his uniform of blue,
Whose martial mien commanded every eye,
And hush'd the children's play, came down the street,
And paused before the house, and enter'd it.
And when he gazed upon the vacant couch
And untouch'd writings of the poet, then
The gem-like tears, pursed in his wrinkling cheeks,
Fell like some rich exchange of value due
Proved wealth of worth within the soul now gone.
" He was my army comrade," said the man.
" Had we but known this," one replied, "his form
Would like a soldier's have been borne to rest."
" He was a true reformer, years ago
The spokesman of the slave," said then the first.
" Had we known this," was answer'd now, " his form
Would like a statesman's have been borne to rest."
" He was a poet," said the first, once more.
" Ah," sigh'd the other, " there his poems lie.
We knew the poet."
" So you bore him forth,
With no parade of honor," said his friend ;

"And that was well. He would have wish'd no more.
The soldier and the statesman are the state's,
And all the pageantry that can augment
The dignity of office and of power
Befits them, as the king his robe and crown.
Not so the poet. He is all mankind's,
Akin to both the humble and the high,
The weak and strong. Who most would honor him
Must find in him a brother. He but strives
To make the truth that he would speak supreme,—
Truth strongest when the simplest, needing not
The intervention of pretentious pomp,
Plumed with vain symbols of authority
To make men keep their distance."

Musing thus,
The man drew near the writings; and, erelong,
Who watch'd them saw them sorted, one by one—
For all were number'd—into seven groups.
And, at the sight, one bending over them
Recall'd a time in which the man they mourn'd
Had talked of mystic numbers; and had said
That, "Like the days that part the weeks in sevens,
And tones that run the scales of sounds and hues,
And spheres that seers have seen in heavens and hells,
Like these did nature seem all things to group,—
To count the deep formations in the rocks,

And forms in life, till seven made each complete.
Ay, man on earth but seven times ten years lived,
And all mankind through seven like phases yet
Might reach humanity's grand Sabbath-time."
And one, they said, who heard these words, had
ask'd,
And had discuss'd the question with his mates,
"Could mind and matter then in any sense
Reveal essential oneness?" Answering which,
"Why not?" had ask'd the poet. "Many a sage,—
Augustine, Plato, and Pythagoras,—
Had talk'd of souls as numbers, ay, or spheres.
Yet none," he soon had said, "could really solve
All riddles hidden in the forms outlined
By nature's curves and angles, or amid
The play of her fair features, made more fair,
Like human faces, by the thoughts beneath,
Read all that so has thrill'd in every age
The spirits of the wisest and the best."

OTE FIRST.

"The burden of the poet's dying thought,
You all have heard," the stranger-soldier said.
"'T is fitting then you all should solve with me
His meaning—in these poems"; and he read
The title "Dreaming." "Truly here," said he,
"This man would tell us of his own sweet life;
For he began life dreaming, he himself.
I knew him when a boy, a poet then,
With brain on fire to learn, aye glowing like
A gilder's cauldron, so the crudest thought
That reach'd it from a neighbor's lip or book
Came from it glittering like a precious thing.
An orphan, bound and work'd beyond enduring
By those whose hard, cold natures could not yield
That genial warmth of sympathetic care
For which the spring-time of his nature craved,
Anon, there seem'd for him but one delight:
It came from realms of dreams, while, on his bed,

Too tired for sounder slumber, he would toss;
And, like a galley-slave, forced out to sea,
Yearn for some harbor somewhere in the world
Where waiting love would welcome love that came.
Oft in rare moments that he stole from work,
Would he confide to me his wrongs and hopes.
I seem to see him yet, the straight brown hair
Toss'd wildly backward from the broad white brow,
The sunburnt cheeks, the deep and wondering eyes,
As blue when grand emotion swept within,
As autumn skies are in the northwest wind,
With just as much of heaven back of them—
Dear boy!—and he has told us here perchance
Of what he dream'd."—So spoke the soldier-friend;
And paused a time. Then, vaguely, with a look
Turn'd inward toward the soul, as if to find
Dear stores in memory, he began to read;
And one by one the people who had stood
To greet the stranger, softly took their seats;
And not alone the poem held them there.
The aged soldier's well kept, youthful voice,
The ringing echo of a singing heart,
Charm'd all, like chimings of the old church bells,
Which, sweet in summer, yet still sweeter seem,
When peal'd amid the winter's wind-whirl'd snow.

REAMING.

I.

Life is poised on slender moments; all eternity on time;
And the "still small voice" reveals the presence of a power sublime.
Footfalls, light as dreams', may wake the slumbering soul's activity,
Rouse the source whence thought and feeling issue toward their destiny,—
Toward the good, if lured by movements where a pathway leads to weal;
Toward the ill, if turning only where the wiles of craft appeal.
Whether come a sound, a fragrance, or a light that stirs the mind;
Something wakes a wish within one; something gleams we glance to find;
And we start; and then press toward it, on beyond the joys of youth;

On, till old age falls in death, to spring apart the gates of truth.

II.

Every thing in art or nature, robed in rich or rude attire,
Gains in beauty while it gains in power to lure a pure desire.
Surface claims may charm the senses, but the spirit from its throne
Waives away all other suitors for what charms itself alone.
Thus we find that, while they long to see the scenes of which they sing,
Blind or banish'd poets conjure forms more fair than sight could bring.
Thus we find, where evening shadows lie reclined at close of day,
All the world grows more attractive, veil'd in twilight's guise of gray;
For, in dim relief, its outlines woo our wonder and surmise.
While the stars like sparks that linger where the fire of sunset dies
Kindle oft our aspirations, which, as grandly they evolve,
Light the brow of meek conjecture with the flush of bold resolve.

III.

Is it strange, that such an evening, when my days
were filled with strife,
Such an evening, far and hazy, seems the sweetest
of my life?
Is it strange that memory, gazing back through
many a year's expanse,
Now recalls the scenes I saw then, clad in grave
significance?

IV.

On that eve, for once, my soul, set free from toil,
had just been brought,
Through a fairy realm of fiction, near the life for
which I sought.
Then I turn'd and watch'd the sunset, with emo-
tions vague and wild,
Till I seem'd a thing scarce human, strange as
mystery's very child.
Not of earth nor heaven appear'd I. I was one
with that mild light,
Which had veil'd in awe the hills before the hush'd
approach of night;
And through all the clouds that floated rose the
forms of angels fair,
And I seem'd to heed their whispers in the move-
ments of the air.

Far adown the west I track'd them, till there met
my wondering gaze
Mountains in the sky that fring'd a sky-set sea
begirt with haze,—
Haze from shore-sand bright as gold-dust blown to
clouds by winds of noon ;
But across the sea's blue depth appear'd to sail the
crescent moon.
Scarce I saw this, when beyond it I descried with
pleasure great
Outlines of a heavenly port illumed as for a heav-
enly fête.

v.

Ah, how wondrous was that city, rear'd amid the
cloud-land bright,
Where that sunset capt the climax of the day's
completed light.
How the wall that coil'd around it glow'd along its
winding way !
And how flash'd the floods of flame that in the
moat before it lay !
What though underneath their splendor stretch'd a
storm-cloud black and long ?
'T was a bass-note held beneath that sweeter o'er it
made the song.
For, above, as if aspiring toward the heaven's en-
kindled fires,

Toward the sky in countless numbers, press'd the
domes and pierc'd the spires ;
Domes, high arch'd, with tints to rival rainbows in
their every hue,
Join'd with spires from darkness pushing, till their
peaks effulgent grew ;
Spires like prayers that start from anguish, aim'd
for where all blessings are,
Spires like hope that falters never while above it
shines a star.
Then—and how my gaze profan'd them !—what
retreats for bliss appear'd
In those fair illumined mansions that along the
streets were rear'd !—
Streets like shafts of light far shooting, fading like
the sun from view,
Back of trees with leaves like autumn's, when life's
fires have burned them through.
In my soul I half believed I then should leave this
earthly star,
Gazing like the seer on Pisgah, toward that prom-
ised land afar.

VI.

After this, my thoughts, returning back to earth,
grew mutinous ;
And rebellious meditation to their tocsin murmur'd
thus :

"Five years—it is long to languish with no teacher but desire
In these hours of stolen study, snatch'd from toil in sweat and mire.
Wherefore was I left an orphan, and the ward, without a joy,
Of a man who into manhood thinks to keep me still a boy,
Keep me back from needed knowledge, like a weakling soon to die,
Who, if train'd in-doors, might fail to make my friendship with the sky!
Why should he so crush and curse me, dashing water on my fire—
Quenching with a hiss each spark that gleams to show my soul's desire?

VII.

"Ah! how oft, released from labor, when day's heat and dust were stay'd,
By the calm, cool fires of starlight, I have dream'd and hoped, and pray'd;
And of things divine had visions, all so complex and so vast,
That my mind could comprehend but parts of them, the while they pass'd;
Parts that yet so charm'd and thrill'd me, that, with all its might and main,

Thought would soar on high to match them, but
would soar and soar in vain,
Till, to my bewilder'd yearning, in the distance all
would fade,
Where their long-drawn trains of splendor slowly
left the world in shade.
Why should mortals be becalm'd amid the earthly
darkness here,
While the lights from countless havens throng the
heavens far and near !
Surely sails, wide spread to woo them, heaven's fair
winds cannot forsake :
That which moves to right moves onward, tho' but
slowly grows its wake.
Surely, souls, if but persistent in the search of
truth long sought,
Spy new worlds arise where clouds had coursed but
watery wastes of thought."

VIII.

Thus with varying moods I sat there, till each radi-
ant sunset cloud,
Like some living form, seem'd buried in a gently
gather'd shroud.
Yet my thought still rested on it : naught, oh,
naught of good so dies :
It but disappears, anon, to don a resurrection
guise.

Blessings grieve us, when they leave us ; but they
leave no sunless gloom.
Everywhere new life may spring up, everywhere
new beauty bloom.
So for me, as died that sunset, all at once there
came a change ;—
For I slept, and dreamt the sky there flew apart
with flashing strange,
O'er which clouds abruptly gather'd, as if thus to
screen from me
Thrice ten thousand flames that lit a path more
deep than space could be.
Wonder then my brain bewilder'd : reasoning all to
rapture flew.
" Surely," thought I, " joy celestial crowns the light
with halo new.
It may be an angel-greeting to some saint ! " then
futile quite,
This attempt of reason left me, for behold ! a
stranger sight :
Swift from flash to flash augmenting, as a torrent
seeks the sea,
All those flames that rose and fell appear'd to start
and flow toward me.
Then my soul within me fluttered. Here was what
I long had sought.
" Farewell now to earthly fetters ! Yes, they burst,
they burst ! " I thought.

Ere they did so, all my spirit grew more calm ; for, far away,
Rose a song with words revealing what the light could not convey.
Sweet it was as if the heavens would all their sweet store shower below ;
And by one flood quench forever all the thirst of mortal woe ;
And my moods were swept before it in a spell resistless bound,
As a sailor, sinking softly, where the deep sea laps him round.
But can I recall the song now ?—Better bid yon meadow nook
Hold the whole great rain that blest it on its journey down the brook.

IX.

Ay, when men who would direct you onward toward the realms of truth,
Where exhaustless wells of wisdom quench desires of endless youth,
In their efforts falter, blunder, and with phrases vague and blind,
Void of close and clear expression, leave their meaning hard to find,
Blame them not : their case is human ; themes and aims as grand as these

Overflow the burden'd words that bear our lesser
thoughts with ease.
Many guiding views beyond us loom but dimly un-
derstood :
Many schemes are hatch'd that famish where our
imperfections brood.
O how oft when stirr'd to rescue those we love
from threaten'd woe,
Or to point them toward the pathways, where in
safety men may go,
Our own lack of tact or temper has equipt advice
amiss,
Veil'd like truth with features hid behind a warp of
prejudice.
Ay, how often, when the light that guided us has
gleam'd within,
We have wish'd that our reflections might enlighten
then our kin,
But though brighter minds might aid them, ours, at
least, were dull as night,
Striving ever, failing ever, half our views to mirror
right.
Foremost of our best possessions, faith fails not
that can but feel ;
Yet how blest are they who know and can their
grounds of faith reveal.
They alone, amid the shades, where men who move
toward mystery

Long to know what joy or woe is yet to be their
destiny,
They alone, with heaven-lit torches, flashing light
the darkness through,
Can disclose beyond the gloom the looming out-
lines of the true.

X.

Power like their's, and more were needed, to recall
what thrill'd me there
In that music flowing round me, as if fountain'd in
the air.
All the tones appear'd spontaneous; yet, beyond
all discord sweet,
By divine and inner impulse made to blend in
chords complete.
Somehow thus the phrases ran, and roll'd, and
echoed through the night;
And the changes that they rang were all to praise
the Source of Light:—

XI.

Hail, hail, hail,
Eternal Glory hail!
Ye powers of light, high o'er the night
Where only gloom had lain,
Began your sway, ere dawn'd a day,
And evermore shall reign.

Before one star had flash'd afar
Light fill'd creation's throne,
And, ere the birth of air or earth,
In growing splendor shone.
Gleam, gleam, gleam,
And ever brighter beam,
And far away through endless day
Forever onward stream.

Hail, hail, hail,
Infinite Goodness, hail !
From heavenly height through day, through night,
And down to deepest hell,
From central throne to circling zone,
Where'er a world can dwell,
The hosts of right their shafts of light
Hurl onward through the sky ;
And rear their bow o'er rain below,
And routed clouds that fly.
Shine, shine, shine,
The universe is thine ;
In blackest hell, burst full and fell,
Like lightning, flame divine !

Hail, hail, hail,
Almighty Truth prevail !
At thy command, in every land,
O'er haunts of lust and lies
The stars, a band of guardsmen, stand ;
And dawn with ardor hies.
The lightning bounds and thunder sounds,
And fire and air enroll,

And all that live allegiance give
To their supreme control.
Wail, wail, wail ;
Ye powers of darkness, quail ;
And flee until the wrong be still,
And right may drop its mail.

Hail, hail, hail,
Unchanging Promise, hail !
O'er all that jars the world, the stars
Burn on the long night through.
Aurora lights her giddy hights.
The comet cleaves the blue.
The sun and breeze from beds of ease
The scatter'd fogs pursue.
From land and sky the shadows fly.
Awaking, winks the dew ;
Speed, speed, speed,
With light sow every mead ;
And haste the time when every clime
Shall glow as grows the seed.

XII.

Ere the echoes that rehears'd it learn'd the tones of half the lay
Those who hymn'd it hove in view from out a cloud of golden spray.
Such a sight has oft allured me, rous'd by morn's first herald-gleam,

Floating up the edge of slumber in a just awaking dream.
Angel forms, no man could number, circled in a band of light
Round a chariot framed of splendor, drawn by steeds of dazzling white.
Softly sped they o'er the vapors ; and, with wings of texture rare,
Woke low throbs of murmuring music, as they lightly struck the air.
And the chariot bore a Being with a smile so sweetly bright,
One could better paint, than it, the fragrance of that summer night.

XIII.

" How could mortal dare to face her ? " thought I ; " nay, it should not be."
And like veils my eyelids fell to screen my soul she should not see.
Then at once my dream had shifted. Down below me met my sight,
As of old, the farm and cattle. Turn'd away from all that light,
Once again my form seem'd staggering through a task too hard and mean,
While my very soul was trembling lest my lack of strength were seen.

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"Cruel fate!" cried I, despairing; "none on earth so curst as I!"—
Then my eyes, above me glancing, saw that fair one still draw nigh.
On she came, until she reached me, bade those angel-bands depart,
And, with accents fill'd with love that thrill'd my very spirit's heart,
"Come," she said, "and sit beside me"; and I rose, I wist not how,
And within her car I found me; nor had known of bliss till now.
Up from earth and through the sky, and over land and lake it springs,
Lightly drawn and gently guided by the white steeds' beating wings.
Then along the long horizon sudden forms would flash in view,
And like suns our skies illumine, as we by them swiftly flew.

XIV.

Soon my spirit yearn'd to ask her what these wondrous things could be.
But, while still I dared not do it, she, who knew what stirr'd in me,
Said, as if she heard me question: "Mortal homes are fix'd in stars.

We have left the bounds of matter ; here are burst
the prison bars,
Out from which, with powers contracted and a
weary sense of strife,
Souls, like convicts through their grating, steal a
luring glimpse of life.
Here are regions where the spirit, freed from fet-
tering time and space,
Wings her flight through scenes eternal, reading
thought as face reads face.
Here the good reveal their goodness, and the wise
their wisdom show ;
And from open minds about them souls learn all
that souls can know."

XV.

"All they learn," I thought; "learn all things?"—
and my dream had changed again ;
And my master stood before me, and I dared to tell
him then,
Till his dark face loom'd like smoke round eyes in
which fierce anger burn'd ;—
Tell him that the heavens had shown me 't was my
right for which I yearn'd.
At my words he sprang to strike me—struck—and
lo ! it seem'd the world
Stagger'd like some drunken giant, while I to the
ground was hurl'd.

"All is ended now," I thought—when, like a
mother's voice in youth,
Rose my guide's : "God's children," said she, "have
a right to know God's truth.
In the world brains mould to bodies, but across its
border-line
Royal minds must share their purple, slaves with
kings become divine.

XVI.

"O if but a spirit's vision once could reach a
mortal's eyes,
In it he might more discover than he else could e'en
surmise.
Hold, my steeds—while men are slumbering, we
may note their dreams to-night.
Note, my child, while passing through them, scenes
that greet angelic sight.
These augment by all the fancies forged in all these
burning spheres,
From the Pole-star past the Lion, far as where the
Cross appears ;
Conjure them like minds that muse them, varied as
their interests ;
Add completed recollection, and all thought that
each suggests ;
Then conceive a soul's emotions, while such visions
loom in sight—

You have only dream'd a dream of one short night
of heaven's delight."

XVII.

While she spoke, from out the distance, rose in
view what seem'd a grove ;
But beneath its boughs a dreamland, like a laby-
rinth, unwove.
There were paths like those of Eden. There were
mountains high and grand,
Hung to wild, fantastic fortunes o'er a dizzy dearth
of land.
There were lakes all diamond-dappled ; there were
streams that rushed at meres
Arch'd by bridges, rainbow-girdled, where the high
spray leapt their piers.
There were flowers that flush'd through vistas,
where alternate floods of sheen,
Rich as tides of amber, flow'd through shaded
banks of evergreen.
There were trees whose broad, high branches cradled
all the stars o'erhead.
There were lawns whose tender grasses could not
stand a fairy's tread.
Orchards, gardens, halls, and temples fill'd the
fields ; and in them seem'd

Every creature, of which fancy, past or present, e'er had dream'd,—
Birds and beasts of all conditions, dancing, dozing, forward, shy,
Strown, as if on isles that throng'd an endless ocean in the sky.

XVIII.

"Can it be that heaven," I ask'd, "is fill'd with thoughts of things like these?"
"In the heaven's blue vault about us, where earth floats in cloud and breeze,
All are held," she said, "that earth holds; nor would past their borders pour
Were the opening voids about them fill'd with infinitely more."
"Can it be that heaven," I cried, "can care for beasts that work the field?—
Then for him who works beside them!"—and with this my dream reveal'd
At my feet the well-turn'd furrows where I trudg'd behind my plow—
Only now it flew before me, speeded on I knew not how,
Only now it drew me upward,—then was not a plow at all,
But the chariot where my guide sat. "Heaven," she said, "deems nothing small."

XIX.

Then, anon, she bade me note rare nixes' forms, whose golden hair
Flow'd about their sunny faces, fair as clouds in sunset air.
Then those clowns that mask and romp she pointed out,—Shedeem and Jinn ;
Then, at flower-beds, peris giddy with their fragrance long drunk in.
Near them flitted timid wights, and, where high cliffs half hid the light,
Dodg'd the goldsmith-duergar, dragging all their gleaming stores from sight.
In a stream were necks and kelpies, pressing down a plump strömkarl ;
Near them, gulf'd in water-lilies, dracs who made a mermaid snarl ;
Farther off, the leprechaun with bantering brogue he hammered well,
Where his quick blows fell more soft than raindrops on the fairy-bell
Then we met with monster-deeves, a korred with her shaggy head,
Trolls and trows in gay green jackets, topt by fiery caps of red,
And a crowd of sly hobgoblins lugging off some cellar's ware ;

And an old-time nis and lutin. All of Bedlam now
seem'd there :
Brownies proud of plaids and thistles, kobolds
flushed with too much beer,
Boggart-snobs astride a lion, roaring so the deaf
could hear,
And frail elves, like smoke in whirlwinds, dancing,
while the högfolk sung ;
Or, detected, swiftly skulking toward the leaves
they hid among.

XX.

Then I saw a stranger marvel :—smaller than each
mate so small,
Floated near the weëst wonder one could ever see
at all.
First it seem'd a passing snow-flake ; then repaid
my steadfast gaze
With the outlines of a skiff there, fill'd with cheery,
film-like fays ;
And up through the shifting atoms of the air that
parted us
Oozed in tiny tones a dĭtty, ; and the lines were
worded thus :

XXI.

To-night, to-night, my fairies white,
The fair sweet air we sail.

But first a tune to tease the moon
That tempts us toward the vale :—
Who cares to go where roses glow
In sheen the moonlight sheds,
And globes of dew are sparkling through
The tent the spider spreads ?
Your moonstruck fay may dance away
And crush the rose-leaves all to hay—
Who cares ?—I don't !—Do you ?

But note you there that maiden fair—
Ha, ha, a dainty bit !
She dreams a dream of love I deem.—
Queen Mab 's a wicked wit !
Come, come, a jump; and down we 'll thump;
And dance about her heart.
'T will beat and beat—aha, how sweet
The thrills we there shall start !
We 'll tickle her neck, and tickle her toes,
And tickle her little lips under her nose—
Who cares ?—I don't !—Do you ?

And then we 'll huff that mourner gruff,
Till he unknits his brow.
We 'll whiz and whiz about his phiz,
And pinch his lips, I vow ;
Then hide and seek in hair so sleek,
And down each wrinkle spare ;
And ply his eye, if dry, too dry ;
And slide the lashes there ;
And when big drops begin to flow,
Oh, how we 'll dodge the flood, oh ho !—
Who cares ?—I don't !—Do you ?

The moon may keep the earth asleep—
We 'll twist things ere we go.
The beau shall toss a baby cross,
The belle shall beat her beau ;
The men be boys ; and boys the toys
Of girls that at them scream ;
And when they wake, oh, how they 'll shake
To find it all a dream !
They 'll think of wind and fly and flea ;
But not of you, and not of me.—
Who cares ?—I don't !—Do you ?

XXII.

Charmed at this, I bent me nearer ; but dismay !
off dodged the toy,
Shaken like a note of laughter from the bounding
breath of joy.
"Cruel thing," I cried, provoked then ; "weazen'd
witchery of delight,
Far too fine for eyes to find you, why should you
have crossed their sight ! "

XXIII.

Then I thought this whole odd vision might be an
imagined one ;
Some had deem'd that half life's fabrics were from
mere thin fancy spun.

"Is it so," at last I question'd; "are not things
the things they seem?
Do souls oft but serve delusions, heeding steps of
which they dream?"
"Those who think so," said she softly, "overlook,
when thinking so,
Truths within man's nature deeper than proof's
plummets ever go.
Souls reflect all life like mirrors, and their dreams
by day, by night,
Though distorting oft, oft image facts too fine for
finite sight.
Borne through life, all move in orbits, whose far
cycles curve about
Circling spirit-light within them, circled by the
world's without.
What they call their consciousness is but the focus
where are brought
Rays, borne in from all about them, burning to a
blaze in thought.
Few can see, beyond their thought, the source
whence all that lights them flows;
Few, except the best whose heaven seems bright
though earth be dark with foes;
Or the worst who learn that, when uprightness
bends to evil's might,
Conscience brings the consciousness that souls have
lost their spirit-light.

XXIV.

"Thus the good are fill'd with trust, and thus the evil oft with fear;
For they dream of powers about them, swaying all in every sphere;
Powers of good and powers of evil. Ay, men feel, that, bow'd in prayer,
Not with flesh and blood they wrestle, but with those that rule the air;
Nor will vanish thence till vanquish'd by that Spirit, whose control
Rolls the star, and waves the sea, and works the most self-govern'd soul;
And can send, for rare communion, cloth'd in raiment all too white
For the ken of common vision, those who force the wrong to flight."

XXV.

We had left that place of fancy, and had reach'd a star-lit sea;
And across its dark, deep waters, clouds, like smoke where burned the lee,
Clung about a crystal temple, rising from the surf below
Like a dawn of endless promise o'er a night of ended woe.

Everywhere behind the cloud-mist, could we see
the temple rise,
Everywhere, each side and o'er us, till we lost
it in the skies.
Then, anon, at pearly steps, before an entrance
dim and vast,
In some way, but how I knew not, we had left our
car at last ;
And through gold-mail'd hosts were moving, who
would part, and pass us on,
Swept, like gods, amid a glory blazed from all we
gazed upon,
Toward a towering portico, a cliff of shafts that
upward went,
Till the very stars appear'd to trail beneath their
pediment.

XXVI.

At their base, a sire with thin locks gray from many
a distant year,
Gazing calmly out upon us, question'd as we ven-
tur'd near :
" Who is this you bring, my sister, who is this ? ah
yes, I trace
Restless eyes and flushing cheeks here ; yes, ah
yes, an earthly face."
" One whose aspiration," said she, " as I rode full
high at eve,

Craved for light, and aided hither, would not now
this portal leave."
"Aspiration," quoth he mildly; "many a bitter,
bitter woe
Is begot by aspiration. There are easier paths
below.
He 's the happy man who holds his head not higher
than his home.
'T is right hard to stoop forever. But I keep you
from the dome."

XXVII.

For this dome then two to fit me, robed me quickly
like a knight:
And they whisper'd, when they left me,—"Faith
alone can find the light."
Then at once wide doors before us open'd like a
dawning day,
And disclos'd a hall resplendent, sweeping through
long leagues away.
All about it clouds of incense floated, fringed with
golden haze,
And within them lamps, half-hidden, shone like
sparks amid a blaze;
While huge caryatic figures, carved on columns tall
and white,
Filed far off like phantom sentries guarding thus a
phantom rite.

Through the clouds that parted often, loomed
mysterious choirs anon,
And a slow, low hymn they chanted, surged afar
and urged us on.

XXVIII.

Come to the love that is coming now,
Come from the world away ;
Come to the source of joy, and bow,
Bow to the sweetest sway.
Find but love for the heart that grieves,
Love for the work one never leaves,
Love for the worth that work achieves,
Love ; and woe will away.

Come to the truth that is coming now,
Come from the world away ;
Come to the source of right, and bow,
Bow to the wisest sway.
Find in the way where all is light,
Truth to impel the soul aright,
Truth to make all that awaits it bright,
Truth ; and doubt will away.

Come to love, and wherever you wend,
All true life is begun.
Ever in bliss toward which you tend,
Joy and the right are one.
Love—and the heart shall warmer glow ;
Love—and the mind shall brighter grow ;
Love with truth—and the soul shall go
On to the lasting sun.

Come to the truth, and come as you may,
All of love is begun.
Whether you feel or think your way,
Love and the truth are one.
Love is the warmth, and truth the ray ;
Truth is the light, and love the day ;
Come to either, you wend your way
Under the lasting sun.

XXIX.

As the anthem ceas'd—ah, music of such import knows no death :
Evermore its tones refresh us, like a draft of angel breath,—
As it ceas'd, I sigh'd aloud, " O would that I their light could share ! "
When, behold, high, high uplifted, I was borne along the air,
On and on, with slippery speed, far sliding still to swifter flight,
Where strode by us tall, white columns, like gigantic ghosts of night ;
Where high arches fell and rose up like an ocean in the sky,
And bright lamps like lines of lightning on the clouded wall flew by.
Then more steadfast came a splendor, and, amid the burning air,

Checks that gently stay'd our progress, in a domed rotunda there.

XXX.

Broad this was and high, heaved heedless of that lavish'd wealth of space,
As all else had been,—a marvel even in that marvellous place.
Such a sight creation's dawning might have seen, when first arose
Morning mists to end the night of an eternity's repose.
All the pavement gleam'd as bright as could that first chaotic sea,
When it floated all the germs of all the beauty yet to be.
And the shafts that held the dome, and might have held in half the skies,
Rose with lines of earthly grace, but wondrous in their hues and size.
Far above, their hazy flutings burst in blazing capitals,
Where amid encircling glory hovered hosts of terminals.
Did they live or not, I knew not, but to my confused suspense
Their high distance made them holy; and I bow'd in reverence.

XXXI.

Underneath the dome's great centre loom'd a mighty throne, it seem'd ;
But with outlines indistinct, for back of glowing clouds they gleam'd.
And the clouds were smoke that hover'd over fires that brightly shone
On a vast white altar, built before and round about the throne.
From the pavement rose the altar, as from waves a coral reef ;
But through lifting smoke its front show'd figures carved in deep relief.
One by one the smoke would leave these, and appear'd revealing so,
Through successive scenes, a tale of which my soul had need to know.
On the scenes my gaze I fix'd then:—In the first, there met my eye
Figures of a youth, and angel pointing out the headlands high
Of a land of peerless grandeur past an ocean wide and lone.
In the next, near harbors lured the youth to shores where wrecks were strown.
Next, he sail'd o'er rough seas bravely ; next, did drift becalm'd awhile ;

Next, flew on where fairest breezes blew toward
many a flowery isle.
Next, great clouds were sweeping toward him, and
his frame was bent with fear;
But the last scene show'd a port with heaven-high
mounts that he drew near.

XXXII.

Whose could be that life there outlined?—so I
question'd, till the fire,
Blazing on the altar, led me to appease a fresh de-
sire.
On all sides, I saw about me, stretching outward
far and wide,
Long, deep halls that radiated from the dome on
every side.
All the halls were lined with statues, white robed,
such as art redeems
From the fate of fellow-fancies, when, too soon,
they die in dreams.
All the halls had pictured walls, of brightest hues
which, far away,
Stream'd like oriflammes of dawn before a march
of coming day,

XXXIII.

Soon I heard that "In the halls and on the walls I
gazed at then,

Art in finest forms had outlined all the ways and works of men.
Each event in life was traced there, till all sank beneath the tomb;
Then, beyond it and above it, rested past the reach of gloom.
All the halls were open to me. If I wish'd I might select
One I chose, and might explore it; and, when in it could detect
What befell the man whose course was limner'd there, when earth was left,
And the spirit journey'd onward, of its worldly powers bereft."—
Hearing this, I gazed about me, and resolved that hall to test,
Where was pictured most of promise for pursuits that seem'd the best.

XXXIV.

Thus resolved, I found one soon, in which were frescoed on the walls,
Wharves and ships that fill'd a harbor, busy streets, and market-halls,
Fruit-red trees, and yellow corn-fields, open mines that gemm'd a land,
And a gay-dress'd throng that drove through winding ways to mansions grand.

"Truth's position aids its mission," thought I;
"men will serve his voice
Who commands what most they treasure. Let me make this hall my choice.
Now to find what wealth will bring me!"—and I turn'd without delay,
Where, at first, the brilliance dazed me, as I met it down the way.
But the hall soon fill'd with smoke, and then the walls, in graver hues,
Loom'd to picture but the ills of those who would their wealth misuse.
Then, as yet I push'd on farther, by and by, all light was gone;
And a sound of floods drew near me; no one could have ventur'd on.
So I turn'd and sought the altar; but, alas, I sought it long
Ere I spied its light, then wonder'd why it was I went so wrong;—
What could mean the gloom and terror?—asking which, anon, I thought
How a night would come, at last, when light with wealth could not be bought.

XXXV.

Then I found another hall, and watch'd it with a beating heart!

For, portray'd upon its walls, were artists famed
in every art.
And about them had been pictured works of chisel,
brush, and pen,
Fit to body forth the thoughts breathed into them
by Godlike men.
Here, too, far and near, were statues ; and o'er
each a gem-set crown
Flash'd with light, and thousands like it shone the
hall's whole distance down.
"This," thought I, "is what was wanting ; why was
I so dull before ?
Here the way is all illumin'd," and I enter'd, awed
no more.
Lighted onward by the crowns, my spell-bound soul
had lost its fears,
While the thought of scenes I saw there bore me
past my mortal years.
My works, too, seem'd not forgotten ; past my
death they linger'd still,
Thron'd a living recollection, sceptr'd o'er a living
will.
Ah, do not deny the soul its hopes of immortality ;
Where did ever noblest living seek a lesser destiny?—
But, while thus enrapt in revery, scenes about me
lost their light,
Introducing dusk to darkness, dodging doubt to
crawling night

And again cold mists were round me, while the unseen water's roar
Fiercely rose again to drive me toward the dome I sought once more.
" Ah," sighed I " those jewell'd crowns are void of all that made them bright,
As the moon would be, if sunlight could not reach that orb of night.
All the radiance that has left them from the far bright altar came ;
When 't is hid, no art can ever make them kindle into flame."

XXXVI.

Now, when I had reach'd the altar, I remained a while in doubt,
Sworn to try no other hall that I had not thought long about.
But, in one, some bright-robed artists linger'd painting deftly still,
And it seem'd less lonely here, where their fair forms the hall did fill.
So I paus'd where one was picturing waters to reflect like dreams
White-draped clouds, on hill-sides, tending slender wants of suckling streams.
Flowers were bending by the waters, grown in fields of varied green

Stretching off toward heaven-hued mountains, which some shroud-like mists would screen ;
Then, where summer fields appear'd to melt to yield their golden grain,
Boys came bounding from a school-house, out toward men who reap'd a plain.
Toward the reapers roll'd a carriage. They were but in laboring guise
Yet the lordliest came to greet them ; and respect was in his eyes.
" Here where nature rules and gives its due to all humanity,
Here must be the land," I thought, " of all the dearest prophecy.
His way surely ends in brightness, who is ruled in every plan
By a love like God's, not slighting one whom God has made a man."
So I tried this hall ; but shortly I had all its workers pass'd ;
And I found myself with shadows, which by slow degrees were cast
Over all the walls, now picturing not pure love but low-aim'd zeal,
Making men, who strove for right amid a storm of lead and steel,
Lose their rights in flame and smoke ; and when, at last, this fill'd the wall,

Naught was left me, once again, but back through pall-like gloom to crawl.
Ah, the depth of my despair now! Could one hall be wholly bright?—
"Nay, not so," I thought, "if even love can lure the soul from light."

XXXVII.

Yet, at last, my heart, still anxious, bade me one more effort make.
But, ere that, I sought the altar; and, when courage dared, I spake,
Faintly asking one who walked there, "Is not some hall wholly bright?"
"Yes," he said, "and they who find it, nevermore can lose the light."
Then I thought, if there be only, anywhere, a single choice,
Fit to bless me, could the blessing come from one with sweeter voice?
And I whisper'd: "O, good spirit, tho' my endless home this be,
Only breathe one word to aid me, I will ever serve but thee."

XXXVIII.

He replied then; "Are you kneeling?—well for those who kneel in youth.

Self-reliance tends to failure, even where it starts
with truth.
Yet hope not for gleams of wisdom lighting all
life holds in store.
Finite souls must journey onward, learning ever
more and more.
Only signals can be given ; look to these ; and, by
and by,
Through the pure white air beyond you grander
views will greet the eye."

XXXIX.

As he spoke, one near the altar, at a hint of his
desire,
Brought a ring, wherein, like gems, were sparks
that held the altar's fire.
On my finger then he placed it, saying : " All things
are your own.
Choose the hall that seems the brightest ; choose,
as all men must—alone."
Near me then the hall of wealth was, which I
enter'd ; and behold,
Found it, to its utmost limit, shining bright as
brightest gold.
And the pictures far within it, that before had
seem'd so sad,
In the darkness had deceived me : they were now
in beauty clad.

And the floods that I had fear'd so, flow'd around
the temple-side,
Weird and grand ; and grand, across them, rose a
land beyond their tide.
And the other halls ?—their story was the same.—
Ah me ! how strange !—
How the lights we carry with us make the scenes
about us change !

XL.

After this, when turning backward toward the cen-
tral dome once more,
Forms of glory gather'd round me, thousands there
not seen before.
Bright they were to indistinctness, and bright robes
they brought for me,
Where within the folds were jewels it might blind a
man to see.
And my whole soul felt the nearness of the love
these friends confess'd,
Where no end of welcome check'd the full com-
munion of the blest.
And, anon, I found me joining in their joy that
watch'd the sight
Seen in stars where souls in bondage sought for
freedom, love, and light.
Then, as one star rose, there rose this chant as rare
in harmony

As if all the souls that sang, had melted into melody.

XLI.

See the world that whirls forever,
Round and round and weary never,
Leaving sinning, glory winning
Through its ever brightening way.
Oh, in worth the deeds of duty
Rival all the claims of beauty.
Onward world, with steadfast spinning,
Learn to turn a perfect day.
Work cannot go wrong for aye.
Woes but roll to roll away.

World of faith, the years are dying
In which clouds about thee lying
Robe a wondrous waste of sighing,
Empty throes of vain unrest.
Life, if right, whatever bearing,
Still for true success preparing,
Must outwit the wrong's ensnaring.
Faith will find that faith is blest;
Wrestle through its prayer for rest;
Dwell with good a constant guest.

World of hope, the stars are o'er thee.
Dawn is waiting just before thee.
Heaven's own light, thy life invoking,
Every promise bright reveals.
Fast shall rays that days are sending
Heaven and earth in one be blending;

Showing what the storm's dark cloaking,
Tho' with rainbow belt, conceals.
Night, too, blesses him who feels
'T is a star in which he kneels.

World of love, the heavens above thee
Hold the clouds, and can but love thee.
Though in spring the storm sweep o'er thee,
April's rain is autumn's gain.
Rock'd by wind and nursed by shower
Life will grow to leaf and flower;
Every harvesting before thee,
Shows the vintage is but rain
Turn'd to wine the grapes obtain
From the floods that fill the plain.

Onward world, desponding never,
Round and round, yet onward ever,
On where sense and sorrow sever,
Onward move thy mission through.
Wisest deeds thy safety highten.
Wisest words thy thoughts enlighten.
Wisest views thy visions brighten.
Holy wings thy way pursue.
Heavenly outlines loom in view.
Bliss is dawning down the blue.

XLII.

Round and round me rose the chorus, like a flood
to cleanse all space.
Far on high its waves would lift me; down as far
would fall apace.

Then, as all at once above me, bright and clear, appear'd the sky,
Wide awake, my eyes, in opening, found those dear delusions fly.
Gone they were with sleep and dreaming, and the star-gemmed canopy
Night had borne beyond the west; and sworn to ceaseless constancy,
Day had come, his fair suite with him, all their armor burnish'd bright,
Searching, as they search forever, for the flying forms of night.
"Dawn has routed all my dreaming!" sigh'd I, as in dew and rill,
All the van of sunbeams early shot reflections from the hill.
"Yes I only dream'd." I sigh'd; and then I roused myself to find
Where had fled the phantom feet that left such sunny tracks behind.

XLIII.

All had vanish'd; but, long after, left like footprints where they pass'd,
Lo, I found within my spirit this impression, there to last;—
That for him who hears anon by day or night the spirit's call,

Naught is fitting save to be and do and speak the truth to all.
Let the world refuse to heed it,—he at least is not to blame ;
For the truth still rules his action, and the heavens direct his aim.
Let the world with force oppose him,—he may lead a worthy life ;
And his words may prove prophetic, tho' his works insure him strife.
Let him make mistakes in methods,—who can learn these till he tries ?
And the world that brings him failure, makes him fail to make him wise.
He alone can hope to prosper, who has learned to use the light,
Ray by ray, that shows the spirit, step by step, the way of right ;—
Only he, who, when his dreaming lures him toward ideals rare,
Wakes to gird and venture on, to be, to do, at least to dare.

NOTE SECOND.

The reader paused and said:
"The daylight fades,
And many times must fade, before I close
My work here for the poet whom we mourn.
Enough for one day that our souls have felt
The flood of fresh suggestions coursing down
From this first poem as their fountain-head.—
But come to-morrow near the sunset-hour."

So on the morrow near the sunset-hour
The people gather'd; and the soldier read
The title "Daring." "Here again," he said,
"The poet's fancy is a veil for facts,
Through which, not dimly, those who knew him best
May trace an early, rash attempt of his
To match his dreams of doing good by deeds.
What gave these deeds direction, was the aim,
Which, just as he emerged from boyhood, stirr'd
Kind men through all the region where he dwelt

To face the persecution sure to come,
And band together that their words and deeds
Might free the friendless, kidnapp'd Afric slaves,
To whom our nation, ruled by selfish greed,
Denied all rights of body or of soul.
In those dark times of fierce dispute, our youth—
Scarce better than a slave himself—infused
With admiration for these workers, vow'd
To aid, or fit himself to aid their work.
And, while to deeds his nature's currents rush'd,
As rills to streams, all, soon, that strove to check
But swell'd their tide. His pent-up powers burst forth,
And swept all patience out of him: less wild
Had been a war-steed, stirr'd by blasts that bid
To onset. Do you ask with what result?
Hear then this poem. Too impetuous
And stormy was the temper of the youth;
And blustering weather blew about their ears
Who cross'd his pathway, like November winds
That shake the mad red leaves, turn pale the flowers,
But leave the vales as barren as a waste.
His deeds wrought little. He intended well;
But good intentions, if they be not mail'd
In prudence and well train'd in self-control,
Are no more fitted to contend with wrong
Than half-stripp'd serfs with steel-clad veterans."

ARING.

I.

Above vague moon-lit forms of mount and vale
There lies the haze-wrought mantle of the night.
The winds are hush'd; the clouds are still and pale;
The stars like drowsy eyes just wink their light.
Earth sleeps, except where on the seashore white
The tumbled waves are waked by distant gales,
Or where the calls of owls and nighthawks fright
The startled slumberer of the silent dales
With sounds they never make till night their plundering veils.

II.

But hark! amid the stillness now a tread
Disturbs the dews that tremble in the grass.
What form impell'd by what pursuing dread,
So speeds across this dark and drear morass?—
A youth it is, whose eager mien, alas,

Bespeaks an aim that seems beyond his years.
Anon, where o'er a hill his path will pass,
He gazes backward ; then, tho' naught appears,
Anon renews his haste, and with it, too, his fears.

III.

He flies from home ; nor first nor last is he
To leave his friends for midnight's chill embrace ;
Nor first nor last is he, whom dawn shall see
A wanderer cheer'd by no familiar face.
Ah, homes forsaken thus, can aught displace,
In after years, the sadness that ye wear
For mourners who the childhood-love retrace
Of those thus lost whose youth appear'd so fair,
Ere storms had swept away hope's buds that blossom'd there ?

IV.

The rose that with the fondest care we tend,
May grace a bush whose briers but cause distress,
And those on whom we most of love expend
Give sorrow in return for our caress ;
Yet need we not despair of their success ;
For oft, where others would move on no more,
Those who in youth these headstrong wills possess,

Their way so push that every check, in store
To stop the weak, becomes for them an opening
door.

V.

But think not headstrong aims alone impell'd
The course of him now borne along this plain.
Against harsh treatment had his will rebell'd;
And so he thought that he but strove to gain
His rights, long sought through other means in
vain.
And yet what were these rights, he hardly knew.
He merely felt an impulse to attain
A life where each could freely seek the true,
And in the world do all the good a man should
do.

VI.

Times were, when, arguing his projected schemes,
He might have told you, souls had need of light;
He might have told you of desires and dreams,
All vague enough to make you deem them right,
Who strove to hold in check his ardor's might.
But heaven of late had sent what roused his thought
And routed vagueness as the day the night,
And oft would show, with endless blessings fraught,
A brightest goal and paths through which it might
be sought.

VII.

That dawn which brings the light of coming years
Had blest his native land with liberty;
And through its Northern borders all were peers;
But, southward, one race held supremacy,
And one, as yet, was held in slavery.
A wrong was this that many more wrongs brought;
For man is man, whate'er his ancestry;
And in a land where speech is free as thought
Whoe'er do wrong, erelong, will find their ruin wrought.

VIII.

So in this land, a call to free the slave
Had sprung to some few lips, and fill'd the air.
And when our youth had heard the call, it gave
Direction to his hopes enlisted there.
And now his life seem'd pressing on to share
The fate of those—as yet despised and curst—
Brave souls who in dark times had turn'd them where
The light of coming good on earth should burst;
Nor knew 't would gild themselves with all its glory first.

IX.

The youth, scarce heeding where he was or went,
Moved wildly on as thoughts that moved his will;
As if, within the present strength he spent,

Unfolding wings his earth-wrapt soul did thrill.
At last, he paused upon a higher hill;
And, looking downward through a moon-lit dell,
Like one entranced, he stood a moment still;
And then his welling feelings broke their spell,
And utter'd forth this fond and passionate farewell:

x.

"You hills, and vales, and streams, and woods, and lawns,
You never, never, never seem'd so dear.
What beauty shall be yours when morning dawns!
But I who love you so shall not be here.
Yet still the hopes, if I be far or near,
Which you alone were told, shall stay with me.
Would man had lent to them a willing ear!
Ah, then, how fill'd with joy my life might be,
For I had had no need of flying to be free."—

xi.

You ask me now, why I, who write here, seek
My mirror for my face that gazes down?—
This face was his, who, spurr'd by fancy's freak,
O'erleapt the limits of his native town.
But his eyes then were fields for fancy's clown,
Not homes like these wherein sad memories rest;
Nor smiles were his, all check'd by Fortune's frown;

Nor did white locks about his brow attest
How rays of ghost-land's light had touch'd its coming guest.

XII.

A few short years, how soon their sun and storm
And shifting seasons change one's face and frame;
And what one vaguely deems himself, transform
To that which friend and foe alike disclaim:
How calm the heart, which once those calls to fame
Thrill'd through like beatings of a signal drum!
Those throbs, by turns, of hope and fear, how tame!—
Familiar ticks of life's old pendulum,
Wound up to vibrate on till hope and fear are dumb.

XIII.

A few short leagues, and, calm and sluggish grown,
The fickle brook has left the mountain steep;
And now, no more in boisterous torrents thrown,
Through fertile fields, flows noiseless, broad, and deep,
Alive with sails and lined with those who reap.
So may our lives, altho' no more allied
To narrow rock-bound brooks that wildly leap,
Send forth an influence no less grand and wide,
Because a gentler motion moves its growing tide.

XIV.

The boy—to speak of him and term him "I,"
Would break the spells of strangeness, as I write,
Which make these life-scenes that behind me lie
So sacred that their shadows all seem slight,
Or only render dark forms near them bright,—
The boy pass'd on; and, just as dawn began
Erasing all the stars with lines of light,
Along the road before him he could scan
A house, and barn, and fence, on which there lean'd
a man.

XV.

Brought near the man, he finds his frame is bent,
As if by long devotion to his lands;
His arms are brown with heat by sunlight sent
To turn red-ripe the fruit served by his hands.
His chest is broad, and gratefully expands
To feel the generous air his health renew,—
A master of his house and farm he stands,
Who, fearing no man, dares to all be true,
With open eyes and lips that let the soul speak
through.

XVI.

He saw the youth; and said, the while there flew
From off his questioning lips a whistled lay:
"You had an early start, to bring you through

A marsh like that by this time in the day.
And those who tramp for hours across it, say
They find no dwelling, let them try their best.
And you were coming east,—eh?—toward the bay?
So could not wait till sunrise reach'd the west!—
And now—ay, sit you here—or in the house, and rest.

XVII.

"'Good farm,' you say?—why yes, we think it is.
No richer land in all the State, than here!—
Grows grain so fast, one wellnigh hears it whiz!—
The crops are somewhat changed about, this year;
But on the hill-side lot, beyond that steer,
Where now those buckwheat buds puff out like leaven,
Last fall the corn—I swear I am sincere—
Grew stalks full ten feet high, instead of seven,
As if to beat the tree-tops in their race for heaven.

XVIII.

"'T is just our breakfast-hour; but spare your dimes:
To what we have—not much—we 'll welcome you."
With this, both sought the house; and there, betimes,

The boy had given his genial host a view,
With words that wellnigh let more secrets through,
Of all those aims that made his nature brave,—
His wish for schooling, and intention, too,
To help to loose the fetters from the slave.
But thus his host would all the plans, he spoke of, waive :

XIX.

" Uncommon sense is nonsense, boy. Your schools
Are good for some ; but are you sure their drill
Trains men for work ? Fact is, these thinking tools,
Are hard to handle—have too much self-will.
They need more meat, than mind. Here, let me fill
Your plate up?—No?—Be dainty, I may vow
You came from snobs, and may present my bill.
These ribs came off as fat and sleek a sow
As ever warm'd a litter—There, try that one now.

XX.

" ' All men should learn ? '—not as you state it, boy ;
All men should learn enough to make them work.
Too little schooling may a man annoy ;
Too much may make him lazy as a Turk.—
And ' all men should be free ? '—Ay, but no jerk

Can root out all the wrong in just a trice.
Wherever grain can ripen, tares must lurk
And grow till harvest come. 'T was Christ's advice :
Impatience cannot force the fruits of Paradise.

XXI.

" 'I have,' you think, 'no public spirit ?'—No ;
But private spirit, boy, which does less harm.
Last year, some city folk came here to show
How wise 't would be—and well their words could charm—
To rip a rattling railway through my farm ;
Then cut it up in town-lots ; just as tho'
Against a pet lamb one should lift his arm,
And kill and quarter it, and take it so
To market, for the few dead coin it brought, you know.

XXII.

"And so I told the strangers they must face
Men who would fight their plan for many a year;
Nor wish'd the farm and farmyard to give place
To park and palace they would bring us here.
Besides—old-fashion'd folk they knew were queer—

We scarcely cared to pay for tripled rents
With even doubled gains ; and had some fear
Our girls, whose gowns now half cocoon'd their
sense,
Might burst to city-butterflies at our expense.

XXIII.

"Ay, far from pining after city-life,
Where things moved not so slowly, as they said,
Our folk had found enough of stir and strife
In this more quiet life that here we led.
We might but watch the seasons as they sped ;
Yet some new task or sport gave each its leven ;
And, whether suns or storms were overhead,
Compared with city-air, all stench and steven,
Although outside their world, our own seem'd
nearer heaven.

XXIV.

"To this they said, as you yourself would say,
'I lack'd in public spirit.' May be so ;
And yet our country folk all thought my way.
'T was public, in that sense. In their sense ?—no :
My own wish did not publicly o'erflow
My neighbors' wishes. Yet a spring may be
A good spring that makes things around it grow;
Tho' not a grand spring ; no ; until, bank-free,
It makes a public swamp the whole way to the sea!

XXV.

"What, must you go so soon? Nay, nay, but rest.
Brows always knit grow wrinkled in their prime.
You 'must go'?—then good-by, and stride your best.—
But pardon one word more, my boy:—one time,
When young, I, too, saw heights I thought sublime;
And tried to drive toward them some older folk;
But, boy, 't is only young blood cares to climb.
Try it: you cannot drive, and may provoke
Old heads, too long ago grown steady to life's yoke."

XXVI.

At this, the youth pass'd out along the road,
His eyes bent downward, gazing on the ground;
Nor did he once look back, as on he strode;
Till, far away, a shaded place he found,
And paused to rest upon a wayside mound.
Then bursting tears rain 'd downward o'er his cheeks
From clouds of grief in which his brain was bound.
"Ah, who could think," he cried, "that one, who seeks
No kindly aims, could smile so kindly when he speaks?"

XXVII.

But where was youth, that in the scales had cast
His hope and fear, and watch'd them balancing,
Who found not hope outweigh his fear, at last?
And thus, erelong, from grief recovering,
The boy grew sure that time would changes bring,
And other souls that would with his agree,
This farmer even—'t would be no strange thing—
Might wish perhaps the self-same good as he;
But did not understand him; no, it could not be.

XXVIII.

More calmly then he walk'd; and when, at noon,
The trees drew in their shade, as birds their wings,
He found beneath broad oaks a grateful boon,—
Three fair-faced women dining near some springs.
They bade him rest there from his wanderings,
And share their meal; then, baiting for his thought,
Threw out so many flattering, gracious things,
That every secret to his lips it brought.
"Ah, here were souls," he felt, "who yearn'd for all
he sought."

XXIX.

"You left your home?"—they cried, "How grand a
flight!"
"And for a fancy too?"—"Aha, you blush!"—
"Who might she be? Had black eyes, eh?—or
light?—

Like this maid here?" — "Not strange a lad should flush!—
Where could he elsewhere find fair fruit so lush?"—
"And he shall rest with us, he shall!" one said;—
When, touch'd as by a snake, he sprang to brush
Her fingers from his neck, and free his head;
Then, pelted well with laughter, from the three he fled.

XXX.

Escaped from them, his feet approach'd a town
From which a railway stretch'd invitingly;
And in its train he soon had sat him down.
It moved, and filled his mind with ecstasy.
The hum recall'd his favorite melody.
The trees wheel'd by like dancers in their flight;
And, as they whirl'd with mad rapidity,
Spell-bound, he slept and dream'd all wrought for right,
And made the world they wrought in, beautiful and bright.

XXXI.

Anon, awaking, he could hear the sound
Of vying voices from a seat behind,
And saw two men there, as he turn'd him round.
One seem'd all eyes of that swift glancing kind
Which hint the culprit, whose too cautious mind

The secrets of his inner self would shield.
Low views of others and himself combined,
Had given this man distrust, not all conceal'd
In manners taught to stay what should not be reveal'd.

XXXII.

Beside him sat another, all whose face
Bore marks of patience, train'd by years of care.
His glasses, lifted oft with easy grace,
Great coat, large pockets, and abundant hair
Marked him—"physician," one whose calm, wise air
Can bid the raging fever sink to rest;
And turn to smiles his patients' weary stare,
While children wonder at his bottle-chest,
And how a still pulse tells him just what pill is best.

XXXIII.

By chance, the two men, as they sat, spoke now
Of one well known and honor'd through the land,
To whom the lad had learn'd, long since, to bow
As his ideal of all things true and grand.
"Can you conceive how one like him should band

With those," the first said, "who would free the slave?
No public man can ever hold in hand
His party's reins, till wise enough to waive
His own ideals for ends which all his party crave."

XXXIV.

The other said—to skip words harsh for rhyme:—
"'T was all quite true; a ventricle should not
Congest an auricle: there was a time,
Place, ad captandum vulgus: this was what,
Hygien'd all influence: ne'er had he forgot
His diagnosis, Medicinæ D.,
Not D. D.: some of these would tell a sot,
Half dead, the truth, and wholly kill him; he
Would lie to save a life—if thus his doctor's fee."

XXXV.

He paused; for while he spoke, the boy's wide eyes
Confronted his there, like an opening soul;
Whereat the man increased their deep surprise
By asking if his talk seem'd strange or droll.
The lad first blush'd; then, gaining self-control,
Confess'd the wonder that his face had shown.
He said: "He might not rightly judge the whole
That he had heard; but, if so, had to own
That he had deem'd it sad, more this than strange alone."

XXXVI.

The two men smiled, and, drawn to trust in them,
The boy was led with ardor to proclaim
His reverence for the man they would condemn,
In terms the two seem'd pleased to hear him frame,
But, as he spoke full long, at last they came
To view his tribute like some long-drawn jest,
Not pointed till cut off. He mark'd their aim,
And, flushing red, pour'd forth what well express'd
How madly hot the zeal was which he thus confess'd.

XXXVII.

"Had not I seen," he cried, "enough to know
Your slight regard for me, without this test?—
No need to laugh your mask off so, to show
What could, without the showing, have been guess'd!
Yes, yes, I was a dupe, I own, to rest
Content to trust in you who dared to spurn
The views divine, with which such souls are bless'd,
As, always looking up, forget to earn
Earth's praise, because of joy in heaven's to which they turn."

XXXVIII.

His quivering lips could hold no further word ;
Nor was there need : the two soon left the train.
Some further jest of theirs was all he heard ;
And then was left alone to nurse his pain.
These men knew not how their light thrusts would drain
The tears like life-blood from a soul so faint ;
Nor thought how much of good is often slain
By small, sharp shafts of wit, without restraint
Shot forth in sport, and lodged where one hears no complaint.

XXXIX.

Our poor boy in his anguish thought of home—
Friends, love, truth, slaves, and all things,—who can know
Round what the most our surging fancies foam
When depths of feeling rise, and overflow,
And swamp the reason in their floods of woe?
Alas, one can but feel (while all sweep on,
And, flitting through their mist-hung midnight, show
Grim ghosts of buried good with features wan)
Sensations too acute for thoughts to poise upon.

XL.

"I wonder if it be that yonder star
Shines now on those I love," so mused he here:—
"Those dear old faces there!—how dim they are!
And shall they nevermore my spirit cheer?—
Alas, how could I let, without a tear,
Mere empty-handed hope outweigh each claim
Of friends though few, who made my whole life dear?
And are they sad, those friends, that here I came?
Or do they miss me not? or, if so, but to blame?

XLI.

"On every side, I see some stranger smile,
And hear anon his ringing laughter bound.
I heed it, as within some chapel aisle
One in his coffin seal'd might hear the sound
Of his own burial hymn, when it had drown'd
His last faint cry of 'murder!' He were blest
To have those friends his final woe surround.
But who would mourn for me? my soul's unrest
The very grave might shrink from, as a worrying guest.

XLII.

"I read a tale, once, of a spar that bore
A ship-wreck'd sailor o'er a storm-swept sea,
Away from beacon-fires upon the shore

That rose and fell with waves that sought the lee.
So here, some power, that will not let me be,
But bears away from earth my reeling brain,
Seems drifting, far from love and life, with me ;
Yet ever fails to bring the final pain,
To snap each straining nerve, and burst each swelling vein.

XLIII.

" But, far cold World, could not I show to those
Who, pitying my desire, would venture near,
That they to friends yield most, whose whole love flows
But for the few ?—Yet, ah, could aught appear
Attractive in my woe to draw them here ? "
Thus mused our boy, too young as yet to know
How youth alone to human love is dear,
Before warm tides of life in veins that glow
Have lost the heat and hue of heaven from which they flow.

XLIV.

The train had stopt ; and from the crowd there came
A youth who, after many a bow and smile
To friends who waved their hands, and call'd his name,

With swaying gait had trod the car's long aisle,
And sat in silence by our boy awhile.
Then, when the train dash'd through a tunnel near,
"A blasted bore!" he cried. "A man could file
His ear-bone off and less confusion hear.—
But you—what ails you, man?—There 's nothing here to fear.—

XLV.

"Ah, you are blue, you say?—The skies are so—
Not gloomy tho', till clouds their blueness hide!—
Then, why hide yours?—Ay, doff the hide! You know
To flay a folly slays it. If you sigh'd
Your sigh out once, it to the winds would glide.
Naught like an airing would you oust a moan!"
And rattling on thus like a wag defied,
This new friend's talk had such an old friend's tone
That soon our boy, who heard it, felt no more alone.

XLVI.

Besides he had no secrets now to hide.
So soon had shared them with his new-found friend;
On whom his woes all seem'd, anon, to glide;
Would God our older cares found such an end!
"With only that much in your purse to spend,

You started out," he heard, "to free the slave?—
Your zeal, at least, was rich, and to commend;
And freedom to yourself, at least, it gave:—
When free from him, who made a slave of you, the knave!

XLVII.

"Now hear you this: I serve a guardian too—
A good one tho':—he always pays my bills.
He runs a school—a school were well for you—
And edits a gazette too, which he fills
By talking at a scribe, whose whole frame thrills—
Not always tho', electrified with joy—
At such discharges emptied through his quills.
This guardian, could he find one, would employ
A scribe in place of me he talks at now, my boy.

XLVIII.

"So go you south with me to Baltimore,
And all you wish is there, and close at hand;
Though, as for freeing slaves, you 'll think that o'er.
In our right merry State of Maryland,
No Yankees with their endless reprimand
Make men run mad with isms fit to wear
Strait-jackets! we their notions will not stand;
Nor them, till sure they do not come to bear
Our own pet slave-girls off for their free love up there."

XLIX.

Our youth here frown'd; yet felt as one when streams
  Upon his waking eyes the morning light
That swings the golden goal-gates of his dreams.
  Where slaves were, could he live? and learn to
    write?—
  It distanced hope he had not dared excite.
And, as it thrills him, ah, how wrapt he bends
  To catch the stories told, too swift of flight,
About this coming home, and coming friends,
While round about each form his joy a halo sends!

L.

He hears about the school: "the queerest set
  Earth e'er had jarr'd together; down from Pool—
The pest of tutors, but the students' pet,
  Who gain'd more discipline than all the school
  Through working hard to break through every
    rule—
Way down to Sims, whose jingling pocket-toys
  Outweigh'd his brain, a fop and fawning fool,
Too mean to join in other's jokes or joys,
The gull of all the girls, the butt of all the boys."

LI.

He heard too of its matron—"sharp and slim—
  Whose eyes were flintlocks, and whose hair of hue
To fit them when they flash'd; and every limb

Stiff as a gunstock. At each boy she flew,
As if they all were cats that she would shoo
From her choice milk.—Ah, 't would be soured to dwell
With her hot temper!—Not a chum she knew,
For all her hints of news that she might tell,
Who found out all folks did, and not one doing well."

LII.

The master too was pictur'd—whom our boy,
When soon he join'd the school, soon dared to show
His very heart of hearts. E'en now his joy
Went forth to meet a soul he yearn'd for so :—
"A man who loved a 'yes,' but dared say 'no' ;
Strict, yet with smiles ; and gay yet earnest too.
They said his life had weather'd many a blow ;
Still was it staunch : when gales of laughter blew,
To hold one's own with him was more than most could do."

LIII.

Some men there are, whose moods, on fire for truth,
Burn like that bush that Moses, one time, saw,
And never lose the fresh, fair charms of youth.
Their souls from heaven itself their ardor draw,
Nor burn according to an earthly law.

Their zeal, when kindled, kindles joy in those
Whom worldly heat would but repel or awe;
Nor ever warps the soul that near them goes,
But by its warmth allures to love that through it glows.

LIV.

A man like this it was, with judgment sound
And kindly heart, to whom our boy was brought:
And whom, the while he toil'd for truth, he found
Prepared to aid the groundwork of his thought.
Hard strove the youth, aye feeling, while he wrought,
That but from deep foundations, grand in size,
Life-structures rose like that for which he sought;
And, tho' he oft would think this ne'er could rise,
Anon in visions fair he saw it fill the skies.

LV.

And now he lived for weeks in that bright land
Where youth appears in endless dawn to dwell;
Where skies of pearl o'er golden clouds expand;
And every breeze o'erflows with sweets that well
From warbling birds, and burst each blossom's bell;
Where every thorn that yet shall pave one's way
Is hung with dews that coming joys foretell;

And all the glitter of the opening day
Still blinds the eye to all that else might cause dismay.

LVI.

He lived, with restless eyes and merry voice
And yielding ways, whose yielding gave them grace,
One fond of friends, who yet sought oft by choice
In soulless forms to find a spirit's face,
In wordless tones a subtle thought to trace.
For this the youth would search through dust and noise
Queer buildings, or the bustling populace;
Or wend, where on the green some crowd enjoys
A firemen's fight to quench the ardor of the boys.

LVII.

Or, tired of sounds and scenes that thus one meets,
His feet would turn, and wander down the hill
Along the shady sides of grand old streets:
And reach the wharves, and watch the water still,
Or ships about it sail'd with subtle skill,
Long charm'd he knew not why; and there would stay
Till sunset's fire his glowing heart would thrill,
Whose throbs within seem'd felt as far away
As bells' whose echoes broke like breakers round the bay.

LVIII.

Again, desires that spurr'd his eager mind
Would dash it through the lines of some chance book,
Much thought to seize, and much to leave behind.
Alas, how many truths did he o'erlook!
How many rich-robed lies for guides he took!
How dazed grew hope, that follow'd in the track
Of forms that vanished! Conscience, how it shook,
Charged by each innuendo's base attack,
Smooth-tongued as knaves are when they stab behind one's back!

LIX.

But books brought good with bad. At last, he learn'd
How faith reacts on doubt; if truth be sought,
How most for those who most have ask'd and yearn'd
Ring echoes from the boundary walls of thought.
But deem not moods nor books were all that taught
His growing nature. There were friends to read,
With whom he banter'd, argued, pleaded, fought;
But soon forgot the passion he had freed,
Half doubting if the strife had been in dream or deed.

LX.

But, more than all, the woes of slavery
Impell'd him on, as often wrong as right,
To plan and work for all men's liberty;
And while he longed to champion this fight,
His life appear'd a tourney, he a knight.
A young Don Quixote, most on guard to dare,
He harm'd more good, through zeal in need of light,
Than any wrong his efforts could impair;
And fill'd with dust the way just where all needed air.

LXI.

For, then and there, what was it save a crime,
To aim one blow at what, as all men knew,
Upheld the social structures of the time?—
A crime against both wealth and custom too?
And where all Northerners waked suspicions, who
But gazed upon the slave with pitying eyes;
As if men thought these eyes were heavens of blue
To lure the slave to cloudless, clear, free skies,
How could this youth escape, who had not yet grown wise?

LXII.

He could not. And, on one sweet eve, when all
His earth-germ'd thought had bloom'd in dreams most bright,
He woke to watch strange shadows cross the wall;
And, glancing up, beheld the welcome sight
Of two who oft had praised him for the might
With which his ardor had assail'd the wrong.
But now, alas, he heard them both make light
Of all they once had praised; and lay there long,
Until his love grew faint, which he had thought so strong.

LXIII.

For who that loves can think a human heart
Can ever lightly lay its love aside?—
The spirit's life, whose gentle thrills impart
Each separate ripple of the power supplied
For every act, can aught its presence hide?—
Ah, sooner might the heaving sea attest
Its life, without the movement of the tide;
And sooner might the sunlight sink to rest,
Nor trail the sunset hues adown the glowing west.

LXIV.

The words he heard, erelong, were, "Did you know
The boy was off again to see the slaves?"—
"Aha, found Venus a brunette, I trow!"—

"Nay, worse than that!—A lip, like his, that braves
Our cuffs by cursing slavery, also raves
Of it to them. I'll track him; and do you;
And if we find it so, then nothing saves
This bird, that fouls our nest for which he flew,
But flying home again, with tar and feathers too."

LXV.

"'My friend,' you thought him?—Ah, some friends we use
Like opiates, when our spirits are alone,
And would be lonely, could not these amuse"—
"And make us dream," chimed in the other's tone,
"Of things that elsewise hardly would be known!—
A dream like Joseph's, of the stars to fall
With all created things about the throne
Of one, whose dream has proved the spirit's call,
And who, some day, shall rule in Egypt o'er us all."

LXVI.

Our youth knew love was no love, that loved not
What made his life worth living. So he cried:
"Rare friends, behind one's back! had you forgot
Your Joseph lived his dreams before he died?

And I may mine. A blockhead may take pride
In never dreaming. Blocks are n't made for it,—
Live not in clouds. Yet clouds not often glide
O'er barren soil ; nor rich dreams often flit
O'er minds too poor to yield the deed such dreams
will fit."

LXVII.

Alas, the youth—how vain an egotist
He seem'd indeed, to trump his own claim so !
And yet, when sworn to enter honor's list,
Of which his fellows could or would not know,
His frank soul merely thought the truth to show,
But he had stopt at words ; and earth, that yells
To cheer the gold-laced swaggerers, who but go
Unwhipt before their trump to onset swells,
Will stand no words in protest—better cap-and-
bells !

LXVIII.

The youth talk'd raving on, till, glancing up,
His favorite teacher's coming he espied.
Then soon the froth that foam'd o'er reason's cup,
Dissolv'd in timid tears, flow'd down the side.
" Alas, and could I help myself ? " he cried ;
" They came and roused me rudely from my
dreams ;
And proved pretended friends, who could deride

And drive me hence for having—not low schemes,
But aims all just and right, no matter how it
seems."

LXIX.

"My boy," the teacher said, "our nearest friends,
In judging us, our works, not wishes, take,—
Works oft as far from what the soul intends
As dreamland from the life to which we wake.
Full oft our traits that temper it may make
Impure the coloring of our purest aim.
So need we caution, and for truth's own sake;
Lest those who watch love's fire within us flame
Shall doubt if it from love or something baser
came.

LXX.

"Remember Him, that once men sacrificed,
But now rules over souls in every land.
The world had long His gentle spirit prized,
Ere it had come to heed His each command.
Remember Moses:—with his mission grand,
His meekness was the trait his race knew best;
Nor can our restless world ere understand
How one can lead it toward a promised rest
Whose own soul has not yet this promis'd boon
possess'd.

LXXI.

" A seer should know that truth, like morn, comes on
By slow degrees, enlightening every sight ;
And, tho' he wake the world it dawns upon,
His faith should wait till souls can see the light.
'T is he that waves his own torch in the night
Who feels that he must force on men its glare ;
And, though, ere dawn, it seem the one thing bright,
If taken for the sun, it leads men where
Their leader's oil burns out, and they themselves despair.

LXXII.

" So, friend," he went on, " you and I and all,
If passion suddenly o'erflood our will,
Should just as quickly our quick words recall.
Thus love may seem our life's controller still.
Bear this in mind, too :—ere above earth's ill
Heaven's light of freedom dawns on all mankind,
You scarce can lift the sun by human skill ;
Nor toward one mount it gilds draw heart or mind
By lips or lives through which no love can be divined."

LXXIII.

Some more he said ; then left our boy alone.
'T was well : no voice could now recall the dart

That, tho' without intention, had been thrown,
To wound the youth within his inmost heart.
Why should he mask his aims, he ask'd, in art?
"Nay, nay; God knew that he would rather die
Than live a life from all life's worth apart."
He sought once more his bed, awake to lie,
Or sadly swoon to sleep, as fearful dreams went by.

LXXIV.

And then he woke, half-crazed. There may be souls
Can lose, and not lose all things else beside,
What seem to be life's only worthy goals.
But he knew not enough yet to confide
In good unseen. He thought how he had tried
To seek the right, and caused his friends but pain,
And done what now he saw he could not hide,
And what must force him from them. Ah! 't was plain,
He could no longer there beneath their roof remain.

LXXV.

And so he rose and left it, tho' the night
Already shook beneath the threatening tread
That brought, anon, a storm. Oh, fearful sight,—
That black car of the thunderer overhead!
Those fierce bolts flashing down their track of red,

And crashing on amid the shatter'd sleet!
And one broad elm, like Cæsar, stabb'd and dead,
Flung up its robes and tumbled at his feet,
While hoarse winds howl'd about, and made his woe complete.

LXXVI.

But not once turn'd he back, until the bay,
The while a deafening peal of thunder came,
Flash'd forth before him, his quick feet to stay.
But, ere it check'd them, lo, the lightning's flame
Lit up, out o'er the deep, a human frame,
Whose outstretch'd arm sank down beneath a wave.
At this, forgetful of each other aim,
The youth plung'd through the deep—drew forth a slave—
Who curst him for the favor—had he sought a grave?

LXXVII.

Nay, freedom! Dragg'd on shore, a shot, well aim'd,
Brought down the slave, whose piercing shrieks cut through
The fitful surgings of the storm, and maim'd
The sever'd thunder. Lamps then gleam'd in view,

And swift police, who spied but to pursue
Our youth, whose flight, they felt, proved guilt and fear.
Then oh, how fast through lawn and lane he flew,
Till all were still again, when, drench'd and drear,
He hid beneath a shed to wait till dawn drew near!

LXXVIII.

At last, it came. Above his crimson couch,
The sun drew back the curtains of the east;
While pale-grown shades began in vales to crouch,
Or, hurrying westward, leave the world releast
From spells that long had silenced man and beast.
Then winds, arising, shook the rustling trees,
As if they said, "'T is time your rest had ceast";
And birds that sang soar'd high, as if to seize
The last of flickering stars, blown out by morning's breeze.

LXXIX.

Soon o'er the hills ascends the sun's bright crown;
And, richly robed, as welcoming thus their king,
The dew-deck'd groves and bushes bend low down
Bright limbs o'erladen with rare gems they bring,—
Rare gifts, borne all too soon, on sunny wing,
Toward clouds that in the blue dome o'er them blaze.

Then sounds of labor join with bells that ring ;
And one more dawn has heard the prayer and praise
Of those who past it see the day of all the days.

LXXX.

They see a day, where heaven's bright grain of life
Sprouts in the last black death-urn of the night,
And buds of peace burst through the thorns of strife,
And souls awake to praise enduring light.
Ah, even now, they see, with earthly sight,
That men may track the rain-storm by the rose,
And make the wake of war the way of right,
And learn, as each fresh breath of morning blows,
How sweet and fair a life beneath the darkness grows.

LXXXI.

So might our youth have hail'd this morn ; but he,
For whom the soft winds whisper'd in their round,
For whom the brisk birds chirpt their calls of glee,
For whom the bright sun up the heavens wound,
And all the world of work awoke to sound,
While men moved gladly and the children leapt,—
He, dead to hope and happiness profound,
His dreams begun, while all his heavens had wept,—
Upon the chill, damp ground, through all the dawn had slept.

NOTE THIRD.

The people waited till another
day,
Then met their genial soldier-
friend again.
"We found our poet all alert for deeds,"
He said, ere reading, "and he fail'd in these.
We now shall find him, like a storm-check'd bark,
Put back to port and waiting.

"Many weeks,
As his own lips have told me, from the night,
When he forsook that Southern teacher's home,
He drifted like a waif from town to town,
Now toiling in the fields; now seeking work
From door to door of shop or factory.
Anon, as news-boy, then as printer's boy,
Almost a slave by day, a thief by night,
He taught himself to print, and gain'd a time
Of leisure, when he read, and thought, and wrote.
But still for years he lived in misery,

Half starving both in body and in soul.
And doubt rose round his growing powers of thought,
Like vapors reeking from the refuse heap'd
On undevelop'd germs in early June.
Perchance his manhood's fruit was ripening then,
For always would he say, and always, too,
While saying, have that tremor in his voice
Which seems to make the soul's pulse audible,
That even in those times of woe to him,—
E'en through his daring, since he meant it well,—
The soul succeeded though his projects failed.
He lost his outward end, indeed, but gain'd
An inward end that, for his youthful years,
Had far more value. But I weary you.
Who hears his words may judge them for himself."

OUBTING.

I.

Fate gave me feelings all my own,
And dreams that others had not known,
And forced me thus to dwell alone ;
And sad, where no one else cared aught
For what I was or wish'd, I wrought
These rhymes to bear and share my thought.

II.

All day, as printer's drudge, I earn
My bed and board, the while I turn
To moulds of type the thoughts that burn
In other minds ; but in my own
What thoughts may burn can turn alone
To ashes that away are thrown.
At night, when like the printed sheet,
I bear them up and down the street,

None there my records care to greet.
So, past where street-lamps light the walls,
At last, through dark and mouldering halls
My form a tumbling stairway crawls ;
It crawls, until I reach on high
My attic-home, in which I try,
Till no more sounds go passing by,
And others' lamps no longer burn,
To gain the skill for which I yearn,
With so much still to do and learn.
I strive to force my sweating brain
To grow me truth, but till in vain
A soil that heaven sends only rain.
What grows, I long to sow again ;
But who can tell me how or when
One gives his best to grateful men ?

III.

I like to think this frame of mine
Contains a spark of life divine,
Enkindled there with some design.
I oft have thought, there ought to be
Some light to glow and flow from me,
And show what all men long to see.
And oft I deem, the while I find
Some men are slaves whom others bind,
That my light now might bless my kind,

Would men but look where I can see
How all could thrive, if all were free.
But much I fear that few can lead
The world to wiser wish or deed,
Because the world so few will heed.
The men who scan us, as a class,
Turn always toward themselves, alas,
Their magnifier's largest glass ;
And small and far seem all they pass.
There may be some ordaining grace
That priest and prince of every race
Have sought through mystic lines to trace ;—
A something back of sword and gown,
Power apostolic, handed down :
There are no wise men to the clown :
The royal mind in tent or town
To loyal genius owes its crown.

IV.

Why is it, all men hate and hound
And hunt me down, if by a sound
I hint the truth my soul has found ?
I changed my city : 't was no use ;
E'en here, this devil's cur, abuse,
Is ever barking at my heel,
Provoking sighs I should conceal,
And making all my reason reel.

To-day, why could I not have stood
The test of inward hardihood,
Content to know my aims were good?
Why did I meet the man I hate?
Why did he stand there with his mate,
Smirk at me, and commiserate,
And anger me?—Were anger wise,
The face that would its force disguise
Would not so blush to feel it rise.

v.

More sweet than heavenly harps are hearts,
When love her low throb in them starts;
More sweet than sweetest songs, when sung,
Are harmonies of deed and tongue
Where two together think as one.
Alas, and what have my moods done
To part me so from all my brothers?—
Yet how can I accord with others,
When all the strings I play, though nerves
That every feeblest feeling serves
To fill with thrills, oft bear a strain
Of stretching fibres wrench'd with pain
That wellnigh snaps them all in twain,
Ere fitly strung to sound aright
Some highest pitch of scorn or spite?
No wonder, gentle souls will say,

The while they softly shrink away,
And learn to shun me, day by day,
"Far better than a friend so wild,
His rival, wrong, perchance, but mild."

VI.

Had I, who know that slavery
Fits not God's heirs of liberty,—
Had I but more self-confidence,
The men who give me such offence
Might yield my thought more reverence.
When foes are sworn to cow their zeal,
Those who would do good work should feel
That none can rightly make right kneel.
Some men have manners dignified
By nature; others learn to stride;
But others yet, with no less pride,
Can never show what will not screen
And keep their inner worth unseen.
The brute that shakes at these his mane,
Lets fly his hoof, nor minds their pain,
If only whipp'd from his disdain
And broken once, might mind the rein.

VII.

O could some Godlike soul look through
My outward life, like God, and view

And judge my soul, with judgment true,
By what I am, not what I do ;
By what I am, not where I stand,
Which souls of low, short sight demand
Before they dare give bow or hand!
Mean, cowardly souls, whose natures feel
That they were born to cringe and kneel,
And heed like dogs a master's heel,—
They show a due respect alone
For those who fill, if not a throne,
At least a station o'er their own.
So must one's worth that these despise
Press on and up, until it rise
And reach a place that all will prize.
Awake, my soul, and strain each power
That hints of effort. Let the hour
Of sleep, that was, watch armor-clad ;
Calm seem a pest ; contentment mad ;
And slander'd patience onward press
Till steadfast force achieve success.
Come wounds ! come jeers ! where were they miss'd
By one who sought the noblest list ?
Zeal ne'er did sigh, but some drone hiss'd,
" Be dunce with me, or egotist."
Wise world, that you our due begrudge us
You yet, years hence, may understand.
If we work out the good, so judge us ;
If ill, time then to use your brand !

VIII.

How sad, when thoughts, proud once to roam,
Abused and bruised, came mourning home
With their young ardor overthrown,
How sad is life that lives alone!
There was a time, when, brave and bare,
The little hands, all soft and spare,
Claspt all, and hoped that love was there;
Not gloved in fear, claspt every thing,
With every rose to grasp a sting;
Then dropt it, sad and suffering.
And what are now those thoughts about?
Oh, they have turn'd from deed to doubt:
They work within, if not without.
Oh, they have turn'd from all the pain
That came from earth they served in vain,
To that still world within the brain,
Where fancy forms its mead and main.
There many a fairest vision, sought
In clearer light than sunlight brought,
Is mirror'd in the wells of thought.
But oh, how oft must one surmise,
While o'er the soul's wild sea of sighs
Imagination's glories rise,
That, as at sunset, every form
Derives its best from cloud and storm!
Oft fancy works but to appease
A restlessness that shows disease,

A fever that the brain would ease.
Oft crimson floods of thought impart
Their brilliant hues to speech and art,
When thus a pierced and bleeding heart
Is drain'd in drawing forth a dart.

IX.

They call me morbid—if they mean
I hate the wrong, wherever seen;
And make supreme my own ideal;
And grieve to find it not made real;
I hail the term. No titles go
From earth to bias heaven, I trow.
Men's normal moods may sink and swell
At one with tides that drift to hell.
E'en what the world calls holiness,
Which ardent youth can ne'er possess,
Is oft—so white and colorless—
The ashes where heaven's fires are spent,
Calm, cold, accurs'd, and yet content.

X.

This home of mine is in a place
Where dwell alone the poor and base,
And I partake of their disgrace.
But, even here, some good I find
Awaits a watchful patient mind.

For, where our wants are numerous,
And fashion's robes are stripp'd from us,
We learn of human nature thus.
On earth, 't is but "the few" can find
The gold that gilds the sordid mind
And common dross of all mankind.
And here "the many" live, and so,
Unable to afford the show,
In nature's naked truth must go.
At first, I shrank from life so mean ;
And oft would blush when I had seen
How man could boast, yet be unclean ;
But, oh, I feel, as weeks wear on,
Vice, oft unveil'd, appears not wan,
And stings of sin wear blunt anon :
One learns to know with little fear
How seldom love and life appear
Full wedded in this lower sphere.

XI.

At times, my door shakes to and fro,
And voices call, until I go
To ask within some drunken foe—
A foe, though in his hand he bears
A draft that, if I quaff, he swears
Shall drown beneath it all my cares.
At times, there comes a softer voice

That vows to make my veins rejoice :—
Ah, they know not his better choice,
Who with ideals for his friends
Finds, in the light toward which he wends,
What all the lure of wrong transcends.

XII.

At times, when wrapt in sleep profound,
Loud cries and crashing sound around.
Bewilder'd then from bed I bound,
Too wise to speak, yet wild to call,
I wander out, explore the hall,
Dodge all I meet, yet dare them all.
A bird, whose wings had glanc'd a dart,
Felt not more flutterings at the heart.
I linger, till in fear I start,
Lest, if my cup of fear I fill,
Insanity, the glee of ill,
Shall rave upon the throne of will.
Then, when I turn from all before,
Swift flies from under me the floor,
And swift with bolts I bar my door,
As if some fiend behind me ran
To scathe the spirit and the man.

XIII.

Calm sleep to weary limbs were sweet :
Who cannot sleep, may scan the street,

And search for watchmen in their beat —
Slow, dusky forms with echoing feet.
I stretch far out : I gaze far round :
'T is weird to hear no human sound,
And be so high above the ground.
I fancy I am thrown adown,
Think how the news will stir the town :—
"A youth was found stone dead, they say " ;
"Ah, yes, I heard ; good-day, good-day."
Ho, ho ! what now ?—why did I start
And slam, with such a beating heart,
The sash, yet leave the blinds apart ?
This mirror mocks my wild grimace !—
Men differ slightly in the face :
And how might mine a madman grace ?

XIV.

How near proud reason's realm may be
That fierce Charybdis-craving sea,
That drags toward madness you and me !
We wander toward its misty strand :
There swells the wave ; here stops the land.
How bright the sea ! how dull the sand!
"Oh Guardian Sense," we cry "away ! "
We wade the surf ; we feel the spray ;
We leap !—and God prolongs our day.
Ah, Holy Wisdom, if Thou be
The Logos from the Sacred Three,

Who all men's good and ill decree ;
And if the wise above us dwell,
The unwise then—but who can tell ?—
May madness be the mood of hell,
Where God, who ruleth, ruleth well ?
If it be true that death translates
To other spheres the self-same traits
Our souls acquire in earthly states ;
If it be true that after death
The heat of some accursèd breath
Can into fever'd action fan
All lusts that once inflamed the man,
Till life grow one intense desire,
A burning in a quenchless fire,
A worm that gnaws and cannot die,
Since worldly things no more supply
What worldly wishes gratify,
And flesh and blood no more remain
To make a fleshly craving sane ;—
If then the passions, anger'd sore
Because indulged, as once, no more,
Rise up, and rave, till reason swerve,
And lose command of every nerve,—
What state can anarchy preserve ?
What state ?—O Christ, I see them now—
Those teeth that gnash !—and see why thou,
To save our souls from future strife,
Didst cast out devils in this life.

XV.

Far off, I hear the midnight bell,
And watchman's cry, and, like a knell,
My conscience calls : " For heaven or hell,
One day toward death, and is all well ? "
Like wrecks that up and down are toss'd,
Till plunged beneath the waves and lost,
How aimlessly, through blame and praise,
Through depths of nights and heights of days,
We men are swept along our ways !
But have our lives no nobler state
Than drifting on with tides of fate ?—
No power to stem them, while they feel
The filling sail, the whirling wheel,
The steadfast helm that guides the keel ?
Tho' oft our course be turn'd about
By wind and wave of hope and doubt,
Come all our motives from without ?
Does not some impulse oft begin
With mind's propelling power within ?
Is not the soul, whose low depths thrill,
An offspring of perfection still ;
And Godlike by creative will ?
And yields not heaven some gleam to thought
Or hope by spirit-whispers brought,
To guide toward all our souls have sought ?
Ay, ay ; do not clear skies reveal,

At times, to cheer our wavering zeal,
Bright realms that mists no more conceal ?

XVI.

I know how deep and dark the vale
Where some, fair fortune's heights to scale,
Equipp'd with sword and shield and mail,
Have found the power to wound the wrong,
And dash aside its lances long,
And press between its yielding throng ;
Till all else wonder'd at the fight
Whose brunts had made their mail so bright
That older glory shunn'd its light.
Anon, triumphant o'er the wrong,
And thron'd above earth's cheering throng,
As chosen chiefs of all the strong,
Behold, they stand where honor dwells,
And earth with pride their story tells,
Nor envy evermore dispels
Their joy that swells at victory's bells.

XVII.

Yes, all made men are self-made men :
We ask too much of friendship then :
The soul's best impulse, in the end,
Is evermore the soul's best friend.
And when truth's whispers all pertain

To our souls only, why complain,
Tho' none but us their import gain?
Let one, who honor craves, be strong
In worth, to make dishonor wrong:
Or, if he crave a sceptre, find
A task that fits a sovereign mind.
Their high ambition, do not doubt,
Is heaven-directed and devout,
Who strive, to plan, and then work out
What God has given them souls to will;
With thankful hearts remembering still
That shallow depths the soonest fill,
And endless blessings wait in store
For those alone who long for more.

XVIII.

Where so much good is yet untried,
Our souls must all, if satisfied
With what they have or are, abide
Untaught, unhonor'd, and unblest;
For but to-day what is is best.
The morrow's gain is all possess'd
By those who journey ere they rest.
Yet ne'er at daybreak had begun
One ray a shining course to run
But snakes crawl'd out to hiss the sun;
And e'er, if truth then dawn'd in view,

Would tongues, whose fangs in fury flew,
Cry: "Who have seen the like? Have you?"
Ah me! and what, forsooth, is new
And strange to men's experience,
'T would libel all their own past sense
For them to treat with reverence!
Oft in earth's bigot-brotherhood
The fools alone are understood,
And stupid souls alone seem good.
But, while the rest are dozing late,
The genius, quick to sight his fate,
Will wake and wish, and work, and wait,
And fix his aim on looming schemes,
Apart from those that earth esteems,
Else would he mind but common themes.
We are not always curst, when born
By throes of nature's freak or scorn
With moods abnormal and forlorn;
We are not curst ere we consent
To dam our own development
By choking down our discontent.
If truth be something sought and learn'd,
He most may gain, who most has yearn'd
To fill a need he most discern'd.
Ay, let the earth, too stern but just,
Crush all our pride of thought to dust:
If still for growth in truth we trust,
While faith can dare, it cannot die.

With facts against it, 't will espy
Far distant lights that guide its eye,
Snatch hope from talons of despair,
And welcome flight with fancies fair.
In the vague light of ages old
The poets were the first who told
The truths to make late logic bold.

XIX.

If only once the souls that climb
So slowly up this mount of time,
Could, with prophetic vision clear,
See views that from its peaks appear ;
Then gaze below, where foul mists creep
Along black waters of the deep,
Note slippery stones that trip the feet,
Or slide beneath the indiscreet,
How closely would they watch and tread
The narrow, narrow paths ahead !
And then, should one a safe way trace
O'er some supremely dangerous place,
What could he do there save to try,
Tho' plains were wide, and hills were high,
To make those heed his warning cry,
Who in the paths behind him moved ?
Though means he chose to some but proved
His madness and his meanness both

Which they must hound with many an oath ;
Though he were kill'd where loom'd the danger,
His corpse might save some coming stranger,
Who in the stare of death could trace
The aims that flush'd his living face.

XX.

Woe me, I boast, but cannot be !
A poet is a babe, whose plea
Is whined in words. Alas for me,
Can screaming scare away one's pain ?
The rattlings of a restless brain,
What good did ever rhymes obtain ?
What is there good on earth but gold ?
Life's bright paths hold a sordid fold,—
Hold men like cattle bought and sold,
Who treat each sky-born child of truth
As valiantly as bulls, forsooth,
That goar, and tramp, and leave to moan
Sweet children caught in pastures lone.
Nay, none who pass his protest by
Will stop to heed the poet's cry,
Or care if he survive or die.
None aid, or deem his aim sublime,
For only those who try to climb
And reach the far-off heights of rhyme,
Can know their distance. Fast flies time :

Too hard I toil, to gain but bread ;
And I would rather far be dead
Than leave my life's report unsaid.

XXI.

How many men, compared to me,
Tho' counted slaves, may still be free?
Those yet possess heaven's liberty,
Whose minds are not in slavery.
But ah, what hell-forged fetters rest
Where one's own conscience must attest
He would, but dare not, do his best,
Because his lust or hunger waives
The truth that but the spirit saves!

XXII.

The truth for which I boast I care,—
Who knows what it may be, or where?
Where is the man that owns the truth?
Do I? or I alone forsooth,
Who scarcely have outgrown my youth?
The minds that think I err, had done
Much work ere mine had been begun :
And they are many ; I am one.
If they and I thus disagree,
And I doubt whether truth can be

In what seems true to only me,
Humility may be my plea.

XXIII.

What right have I to blame the earth
When I have woe and it has mirth?
Its throngs around me feast and dance,
And all their joys in life enhance
With friends, who prize their every glance;
While I, like some physician, trying
His poisons on himself, am lying
A martyr where none need my dying;
But scout my sick, insane idea,
Too well to test my panacea.
Why should they not? A man of sense
Trusts first his own experience;
Nor waives the truth he draws from thence
For all mankind's experiments.
But I, who seek the good of earth,
Do I concede that it has worth?
Or does the world in me perceive
That which can make it long to leave
Its gains behind, and mine achieve?
Nay, let me seek some better way.
When into doubtful paths they stray,
The wise turn back, tho' fools may stay,
Consistent—but that title lacks

One word to make it fit the quacks,
Where wisdom grows and change attacks,
Consistent—monomaniacs.

XXIV.

Grand it is new life to borrow ;
Like a spirit dead to sorrow,
Dead to all earth's dread to-morrow,
And to wake in realms of laughter,
Free from grief before or after.
Hail the eye, so brightly glancing.
Hail the music, and the dancing.
Hail the feast, and, echoing o'er us,
Hail the wine-brought cheer and chorus.
When such joyous deeds employ us,
Why should graver thoughts annoy us ?

On the dance !—but ah, what feeling
O'er the soul is vaguely stealing
Through the blaze and buzz and wheeling ?
When the best ideals lure one,
Only then can aught assure one
That his motive is a pure one.
Who would let a soul, nor fear it,
Be embraced with no love near it,
Both to cherish and revere it ?

Back to music ! Ah, to use it,
Seems all holy when we muse it.

Surely wrong could not abuse it!
All our lives, we start and wonder,
In this under world, what blunder
Woke in heaven the voice of thunder.
Yet it peals; and oh, how sadly,
Like the storms that gather madly
Over days that dawn so gladly,
Burst on heavenliest harmonies
Notes from where no music is!

Back to feasting! Ha, they cheer it.
Here 's to health!—they do not hear it?
Here 's to health!—what, dare they jeer it?
Lo, they tremble—Do they fear it?
Look—my soul!—a man has tumbled;
Shown himself a beast, and humbled
Man and God, at whom he grumbled.—
Moans a wife now never sleeping,
Babes that her thin hands are keeping:—
Waits a grave where none are weeping.

Back from earth! No, fruit is in it
Fit for peeling. Who begin it,
Find the fruit has worms within it.—
What, my soul, does good decay so?
Let me lie before I say so!
Heaven would let the devil never
Rile clear springs that gush and ever
Thus refresh our faint endeavor.

Our own spirit, when too near it,
Taints the good that comes to cheer it:
We debase until we fear it,
Joy that was not meant to curse us,
But to nerve us and to nurse us.
Oh, for right to re-imburse us!
And the day, to dawn above all,
Where, at last, we all can love all!

XXV.

When sad from self-satiety,
Why should one shun society?—
It rouses him from introspection,
And routs his dreams of drear dejection.
I think, as pools, whose overflow
Not freely off through earth can go,
Will breed foul mists, that reek and rise
And dim the earth and cloud the skies,
Our thoughts, if not allow'd to flow
Toward others freely—who can know?—
With vapory whims may blear the mood,
And thus deform the objects view'd,
And half the light of life exclude.
An eye, made dim, may facts gainsay
And see, in fairest forms at bay,
But lions fierce that fill the way.
When dull to sounds, a man may fear

And take the rumbling he may hear
Within his own disorder'd ear
For footsteps of advancing strife.
Whate'er we seek or shun in life,
Too often we ourselves conjure
The direst foes its veils obscure.
Come then, my soul, and open wide
Those doors that keep the world outside ;
And welcome, as thine own, the worth
Of sunlight, beauty, friendship, mirth,
Design'd for him whose home is earth.

XXVI.

Amid the traits of multitudes
The Maker speaks through many moods
Of truths that are not understood
By those who by themselves do brood.
And better be, in lone despair,
Some king's court fool, astride a chair,
Who dreams he rules a kingdom there,
With stock-still statues his hussars,
And scarfs of Knighthood, but the scars
Deep-whipt across his bleeding back,
Than be a man whose life must lack
The love that waits on friendship's throne.
For all our worth is crown'd alone,
When friends have made our cause their own.

XXVII.

What power on earth compares with love?
It rules alone in heaven above.
But love in heaven is always just;
And so I think I would not trust,
But fear a friend, by day or night,
Whose love contain'd no love of right.
The world is wide, and wisdom strange;
To find it one must freely range;
And, when from this to that we change,
We lose our friend, unless his mood
Will justly weigh our former good
With what is now misunderstood,
And though he cannot see our goals,
Have faith enough to trust our souls,—
Faith man as well as God demands
From every soul that near him stands.
Oft, when so far and hid, how could
We point our goals out, if we would;
Yet then we like to be thought good!
And oft there comes a need of rest,
No strength have we to do our best;
And then, if friends yet seek a test,
Our home is like a sick bird's nest,
Whose fellows' beaks all pierce his breast.
Strange cure!—yet 't is an old complaint,
That much of love, when only faint,
They peck to death to make a saint.

XXVIII.

Within our souls is much of yearning
That patient thoughts are slowly turning
To deepest and to broadest learning
That cannot answer back a "why?"
Like sailors, when they watch a sky
Where fogs, offscourings of the sea,
Becloud their sight, so often we
Must guess our reckonings, it may be.
Then ye who with us onward sail,
And watch our ways, with faces pale,
And, hissing fiercely as the gale,
Our right of reticence deny,
Ye force us, if we must reply,
To make your fears increase, or lie.

XXIX.

Ah, in our good society,
(Where things that gain acceptancy
Are fashion's phrases, and an air
Which, caught with neither thought nor care,
Make wits and fools both equal there),
Lies oft seem wiser than the truth.
Like bodies why should souls, forsooth,
Not be well padded, stay'd, and laced
To suit the world's prevailing taste,
Till through the form no truth is traced?

And so to play with lies may be
The surest way to sound the key
That makes all social tones agree ;—
Ay, it the one sure note may strike
That moves all men to act alike.
And yet if love must love the soul,
What power more lovely can control
The men we meet, than words and ways
Unveiling life so all can gaze
On thought behind the outward phase,
While every eye serene and bright,
Transparent with the inward light,
Reveals what thrills angelic sight !
If one in friends like these confide,
He need not fear what veils may hide
In moods that back of them abide.—
I watch'd a man and maid, to-day :
Each dimm'd the other's eyes with spray.
He dash'd from his life's dregs unseen
What pleased the lady's wistful mien,—
A maid not vicious, yet I ween
Not loath to be, with open eyes,
His mate whom honor could not prize.
Ah, lust is lush in flatteries wise !
Full well she liked her dash of danger
With such a spicy, saucy stranger—
But let them pass. For conquest girt,
The man a rake, the maid a flirt,

Will get, when caught, their own desert;
Be prey; and prey are always hurt.

XXX.

Who craves the fruit of friendship knows
How worthless now is much that grows.
Our friends, at times, are parasites,
Who drain our strength, to crawl to heights
On which they thrive on other's rights.
At times, not made for light, they spring,
As fits an upstart underling,
Beneath the shade our branches fling.
In either case, it scarce would suit
Their aims, to bear the best of fruit.
The usual yield that fills the stalk
Is promissory buds of talk,
Or gossip-tales—which spring around,
If low-lived friends gain slightest ground,
Like toadstools where decay is found.
These gossips all are scavengers
Of nobler people's characters.
And how can one of taste or sense
Be made, and yet take no offence,
The cess-pools of their confidence?

XXXI.

They scarcely let one rest in bed;
They whisper so, till all have said

Their worst about some heart or head.
Mean slanderers of characters,
These friends that stick to us like burrs,
Throng every home, and boast an ear
Well hugg'd against one's heart, to hear
Each secret throb of hope or fear.
Why tell they what they ne'er have known?
And force one, since he cannot own,
To leave their untrue love alone?
A time there was I thought mankind
Had all an inborn right to find
How truth appeal'd to every mind.
How noble is the task, I thought,
When one has wisdom gain'd in aught,
To show what he has thus been taught!
And this to do, my every nerve
I strain'd and pain'd, so all might serve
For men to harp on. But the strings
I held to them, were scarce the things
For them to harp on with content.
Men guess not oft the whole truth meant
By words that voice another's thought.
The truth would seem too cheap, if brought
To souls that ne'er for it had sought.

XXXII.

A man who cannot bear abuse
Would better live a mere recluse,

Than turn his own soul inside out
Because, forsooth, men stand in doubt
Of what he thinks the most about.
Alas, where foes our souls assail,
Not all can conquer, stript of mail,
What spurs the firm may wound the frail.
Ere more I stoop to be earth's fool,
I swear to figure as its ghoul,
And chum with nightmares, to affright
A world that keeps my soul in night;
Or play the owl, and rouse a toot
So mean that all shall at me hoot.
Hail open hatred! but earth's fangs
And secret hissings bring one pangs
No nerve can measure. These I fear
And from them seek my attic here
That shields me like a soul in clouds,
When one has left the grave's white shrouds
And crawling worms that gnaw'd his heart,
Ere he and things of earth did part.

XXXIII.

It is not wholly misery,
To be bereft of sympathy.
Perchance, a wise Omnipotence
Makes plain mere surface-difference
To join men in a deeper sense.
Beneath the whur of worldly strife,

All undisturb'd, there dwells a life
That feels the tender infant-plea
Of something grander yet to be.
There winds do whisper, waves have speech,
And shapes and shades have features each
That friendly to the soul appear,
And bring a Spirit subtly near,
And make the truth of heaven seem clear.
Perchance, when driven to gaze away
From earth, to find life's perfect day,
A soul so yearns for what should be
That God, who always will decree
His presence where men bend the knee,
Trails, through the strange unearthly light,
His robes that, while they blind the sight,
Yet lure men onward toward the right.

XXXIV.

Of late, when I am all alone,
I try to make the tests my own
That wise Philosophy has known.
My questioning thought to satisfy,
With eager soul but patient eye,
I search in every moving thing,
To find, at last, its hidden spring.
I fancy it is fire or air
Or mind itself so conjuring there.
I press against the window pane,

Ask—feels my nerve? or feels my brain?
What is it joins my sense and soul?
Is it the Absolute's control?
Or is it faith? or is it aught
Beyond the ebb and flow of thought?
Am I, who muse thus, made to be—
Responsible in no degree—
The vagrant wave of some vast sea?
Or am I more than most men deem,—
Are forms that round about me gleam,
Things not substantial as they seem,
But only phantoms of a dream?
If so, if not, can men, forsooth,
With all their searching, find the truth?
Or do their eyes, approaching near
The grandeur sought, with vision blear
See all things falsely looming here?—
Then flashes right, as lightnings glance?
Or dawns it o'er some dozing trance?
Shall one know more when earth is done?
Reach misery? or oblivion?
Or through some mystic, spiral way
A Babel mount, and there survey
An earth become a heaven for aye?

XXXV.

But hold! thus thinking, I but hie
Some new-robed heresy to try

Which made, of old, a martyr die.
Then is the church the source of right?
Or is the state? or is the light
Of conscience? or is happiness?
Or noblest wish? or what men guess
Shall most the most of mortals bless?—
When, started once in plainest ways,
My pathway winds amid a maze
Where things I hate destroy my trust,
And nothing more seems kind or just.
Then why search I save what is nigh?
These earthly eyes can never spy
Beyond where heaven has hung the sky.

XXXVI.

Ah, that which made the stars made earth;
And heaven's is one with human worth.
The light that lures beyond all sin
Is one with love's that burns within.
Whate'er I doubt, I know full well
Who made the soul must it impel;
Whate'er may fail, heaven must reveal
The truth to those who truly feel
That they pursue a true ideal.
And so, when ceaseless calls appeal,
One dare not from them turn away.
Nay, nay, he must some work essay,
However slight, in every fray.

Who blows a bugle, beats a drum,
Or jingles rhymes, may rouse in some
That spirit which, in truth's grand war,
Gains all this life is given for!
Yes, truth there is—I long have thought—
One finds, when he has merely sought.

XXXVII.

Alas, but still desire will sink,
And faint, and almost die, to think
'T is now well nigh six thousand years
That Lamech's verse has voiced his fears,
And men have search'd all earth about,
Nor is there yet aught less of doubt.
Oh, what can one late poet say
That he has found, to aid their way?
Or how can one late poet know
If good or ill be friend or foe?
What is the power that lures a soul
In ways beyond its own control,
Till fever'd so by strange delights
Of dreamy days and sleepless nights?
Ah, why should one who shrinks from sight
Essay to push where fame's clear light
Can make him but a target bright,
Where every individual mood
And all the best he has pursued
Is flouted or misunderstood?—

Where sense might rather wish to be
A wild beast caged for men to see
Than be a lion such as he?—
With every word he speaks the cause
Of public jeering or applause,
And every one he loves, in fear
That half the world will elbow near;
Through life a slave to scrutiny,
When dead, a dress'd-up effigy,
A puppet of biography,
That dances high or dances low
To please the men who make him go—
To please the men who strip him bare,
To bring him shame, or make him wear
A suit striped like a convict's, where,
With every hue that helps his fame,
Alternate shades insure him blame?
Ye fools, who ne'er for wisdom sought,
And ne'er for deeds immortal wrought,
Ye never knew, nor fancied aught
That near'd at all the inward thought
Of men of truth, whose footsteps went
Through life that was one long ascent:
They did not seek a monument.

XXXVIII.

All wild with my bewilder'd thought,
I paced the silent night, and sought

Some rest like heaven's dear rest above,
Some love to teach me more of love.
I reached a church with open door,
Whence music o'er the air did pour,
The air that trembled as it bore
These sacred sounds of holy lore :—

XXXIX.

"Father of our spirits, hear us,
And in mercy now draw near us,
And with Thy blest presence cheer us,
While our spirits look to Thee.
Thou for whom the stars are burning,
Do not, Lord, disdain the yearning
Of the hearts to Thy heart turning,
With their wants their only plea.

"Long in doubt's dark ways abiding,
Lord, we need Thy light and guiding,
Minds to know, and souls confiding
In Thy precious truth and love.
When Thine inward voice invited,
And desires for good incited,
We have still'd, because we slighted
All that call'd our souls above.

"Even if, forsaking pleasure,
We have sought for truth like treasure,
Oft we but would test the measure
Of what our own strength could do ;
And, beyond our best endeavor,
Full assurance found we never

That, if wrong, the old life ever
Can be cancelled by the new.

"Naught is left us, Lord, we feel it,
Holy writ and reason seal it,
And all loving lives reveal it,—
But to cast ourselves on Thee.
Here we come before Thee kneeling,
Moved by far too little feeling;
Yet to grace divine appealing,
Wilt Thou, Lord, reject our plea?

"Nay, our souls for mercy sighing,
Think of Jesus, living, dying,
And they know Thy love replying
Need not wait for worth in us.
With our strength impair'd and sinking,
From each nobler duty shrinking,
Lord, we praise Thee most in thinking
Thou wilt yet receive us thus.

"Thou wilt, Lord, from Thy high station,
Pardon us, and send salvation,
Till Thy Spirit's inspiration
Make us all we ought to be.
Void of good, yet Thou canst make us
Fill'd with what Thou wilt. Oh, take us,
Own us, hold us, nor forsake us,
For our spirits look to Thee."

XL.

Scarce into stillness died the song,
Ere tones rose up so sweetly strong

They check'd the rustling of the throng,
As Christ's own voice above the sea
Calm'd once the troubled Galilee.
Then, while I paused yet more to hear,
Like storm-toss'd seas made calm and clear,
In which the mirror'd heavens appear,
My moods, no more in sad commotion,
Were fill'd with heaven-inspired devotion;
And, as the sailor, while the waves
Are roll'd apart like opening graves,
Recalls a time of calm he craves;
Thus oft my life, as woes increase,
Recalls with joys that never cease
These words that fill'd me then with peace:

XLI.

"'The truth—the truth shall make you free.' Ah, friends,
What would your spirits give, could they be free?—
I mean your spirits, friends: all gospel truths
Are given for these: I mean those moods within,
Those thoughts and wishes that are ever ruled
By something that seems not to leave them free,—
By some vague force that in the inmost soul
Holds all the reins of action, guiding one
Along some safe but strait and narrow way;
Now checking thoughts that long to turn from it;
Now in the right course urging faster on
Too sluggish wills, or lashing their revolt
With all the scorpion scourges of remorse.

No matter by what name men term this force—
Their conscience, their ideal, their inward light—
It wakes in every soul that lives, a sense
That each, so far as he may know the truth,
Should ever struggle to obey it too.
You, who in bondage feel because your lives
Have made your conscience curb you for your sins,
Think not your conscious wills can rid your souls
Of that which will not mind a mortal will.
The law of truth, which is our spirit's law,
Is omnipresent as our spirit's Lord.
You cannot fly from it. Your vain revolt
But works your ruin, like a rebel's rage
That but calls forth a king's authority.
The truth can never change. 'T is yours to change
And love its rightful rule. And would you ask
How can one love this vague, uncertain thing
Men term the truth?—Friends, it would not be vague,
If we could know but one whose words and works
To it had been conform'd. And One there was
Who, when his mien, transparent with a light
That seem'd the truth's, had drawn men toward himself,
Said—what they all had felt—'I am the truth.'
Think you his claim so strange? Had earth no need,
No deep desire for one to image forth
This truth that rules our spirits, that he be
Our leader and our teacher of the right?—
Ay, more than this, the inspirer of our love?
Ah, friends, if he who lived to do earth good,
Denying self, and dying, at the last,
To save the world from falsehood and from fault,—
If his life were, indeed, the life of truth,
What can we do, if just alone to self,

But love the truth and live the truth, and be
Ourselves the saviors of our smaller spheres?
Ay, while we watch the law that he lived out,
Our love will follow him, instinctively;
And, while he draws us onward toward himself,
Our outward lives will serve truth's inward laws,
Unconscious of the conscience that but checks
The course of him who moves toward conscious wrong.
Then, friends, then would you seek the thing you wish
Nor feel your conscience curb you, wish for truth;
For when your spirits learn to know of this,
And love and trust and live it, yours will be
A will that heaven itself can never bind.

" And more, dear friends; below the reach of will,
Oh, have you never felt within the soul
Desires that search far off in thoughts that steal
All rest from sleep through dreams and revery;
As if the spirit in its loneliness
Were haunted by some long-lost sympathy,
And struggling to regain the sunder'd state?—
Deem not to end these wants by earthly gains.
While seeking them, the boy would be a man,
Maids blush for maidenhood, and lovers kneel,
Then firecely strive for wealth and power and fame.
But, tho' they know it not, they ever strive
For gains that loom beyond their earthly sphere,
Until their wasted energies give way,
Or mount earth's thrones to feel they rule, alas,
Like Alexander, only vanity.
For ah, their spirits crave the Infinite,
Nor can be sated save by that embrace
Which makes them one with God, when every vein

In all their nature thrills to feel within
The omnipresent current of the love
That pulses from the heart of hearts to which
All spiritual being owes its life.
And what can join our spirits to their source,
And free them from the grasp of finite things,
Except the law of truth, as it controls
Our lives, when in our souls we learn to know
And live a love like his who was the truth?

" The world has its encircling customs too,
Drawn sharply round the spheres we fill in life.
They make one shame-faced, make the soul a slave.
We need the truth to free us from the world.
How can it, ask you?—Why, friends, those who live
For truth, find all their weakness, well confess'd,
No cause for shame! Nay, nay, they kneel to join,
With what they are, and not what they are not,
The royal priesthood of humanity.
Before the waiting shrine this priesthood serves
There can be no one, not the least of men,
But has his mission. Half a mortal he,
And half a spirit; half the son of earth,
And half of heaven; it is his work divine
To mediate for his race between the two;
To take the life God gave him at his birth,—
Its germ, its growth, and all its varied fruit,—
And offer it, like him—that greater priest
Who offer'd more—a willing sacrifice
Upon life's altar, where the heaven-born soul
Is tested and refined by fires of earth.
Then must he work with whatsoe'er survives,
And show to men his preservations grand

Of common things that they profane and slight,
And hush their murmurs by sublime appeals
That urge their spirits to the spirit's best.
Thus can he fill a worthy sphere, and be
Earth's humble victim, who, its prophet too,
Reveres his life for what his life reveals.
Oh, you who crave men's faith in what you are,
No selfish wish need yours be, if you crave
No praises for your faults, but shun afar,
With equal dread, false frowns and flatteries.
Ay, you do right. God speed your yearning souls!
Crave manhood's mission, earth's acknowledgment
That you are priests, its honor for your truth,
And, with your own, the world's development.

" Live self, but live not for self. Not for one,
For all of us the truth brings liberty ;
For our own spirits, when we serve the right,
Free wishes, hearts, and hands ; for others charity.
Still more and more do truth's joint heirs with Christ,
Without regard to others' praise or blame,
Love all who love the truth that makes them free.
Ah, when one learns how infinite this is,
How many are its ministers, and how
They differ infinitely in their ways,
He learns to reverence every word and deed,
No matter whose or what, that does not keep
The truth back from its final victory.
Tho' he himself may be misunderstood,
Gainsaid and thwarted by the very souls
With whom his has enlisted, if they yet
Press bravely forward, he may feel for them,
If less than whole love, more than interest.

His lord-like spirit, like the spirit's Lord,
Content to work or wait, to do or die,
If but the truth he serves may be supreme."

XLII.

Do I still doubt?—at least I know
That truth and faith within us grow
Not like the weed the wind may sow.
They are not things that spring unsought,
Nor do they spring—as tho' 't were naught
To will and do—from merely thought.
Give monks the meed of vague abstraction,
But noblest souls find satisfaction,
And consciousness of life, in action.
'T is they that, where they cannot know,
Walk on by faith, who strengthen so
The faith by which they further go.
'T is they that try what work can earn,
Who test their own work's worth, and turn
From wrong to right for which they yearn.
'T is they whose thinking aids their kind,
Who, while they help their brothers, find
The truth that most rules every mind.
And, while to this they too adjust
Their lives, because they feel they must,
Their faith beholds the form august
Of God behind each form of dust;
For God's truth only all men trust.

And so I hold that work controls
The life that blesses most our souls.

XLIII.

Ah me, to think what all could win,
In spite of natures prone to sin,
By working well their wealth within !—
For it, like gems of priceless worth,
That fill the mire and mines of earth,
Oft gains its dearness from its dearth ;
Nor oft is got, until, at last,
The pick, or flood, or fire, or blast
Has rent the place that held it fast.
Then wonder not that wreck and woe
Should be one's lot on earth below.
Kind heaven itself may open so
The spirit's depth, its worth to show.
Earth needs the sight. All men who try
To glorify the Lord on high
Must prove his goodness through their own.
They cannot lead one toward His throne,
Save through the Godlike traits alone
That their transfigured lives have shown.

XLIV.

Too many sate their souls with arts
That fit their lips, but not their hearts.
Not skill to chide another's pride

Can make a wise or welcome guide ;
But he the best for noble deeds
Inspires his kind, who best succeeds
In finding what his own soul needs.
Though others' need to his be small,
He may be less, yet more than all.
Nay, God gives each an equal call,
With ill to bear and good to share
And, whether it be full or spare,
Some truth to show the Godlike there.
Let then the Spirit's voice be heard,
Tho' warbling only like a bird
Vague sounds that hardly hint a word.
The men who hear that call on high,
I will believe, if toward the sky
They turn, and think that love is nigh,
Are bless'd tho' they but heave a sigh.
Who wants to fill an earthly throne
Birth gave him not ?—Far better own
Oneself and be oneself alone.

NOTE FOURTH.

The morrow came, and with it came again
The people eager for the poet's rhymes.
"He whom we mourn," the soldier said, "knew well
That all men's wisdom flows from each man's thought;
And every page of progress but records
The impress of this thought express'd in deed.
So when he deem'd that he his doubt had fathom'd
And found truth's rock beneath, he could not rest
And not proclaim it. When the Sabbath came
It found him hard at work in school or church.
Ten years, content with gains from week-day toil,
He gave all Sabbaths to his fellow-men.
He taught, he preach'd, and help'd in home and lane
The sick and poor; and much he loved the work;
And loved the little children of his flock;
And loved their mothers as the soul may love;

But loved the full-grown men most heartily;
For he could give strong feeling vent with them,
Nor find them shatter'd by its vehemence.
'Give me the spirit,' I have heard him say,
'That comes to meet my own with every thought
Full-girded for a final test of strength.
From tilts with it my soul that strives its best
Emerges conscious of new power acquired.
Ah, could they all who plead with men for truth,
Meet face to face convictions that are strong,
How strong would grow the pleaders, and how wise!
No longer, fill'd with fear lest prejudice
Should flee the shock of unaccustomed thought,
Would coward-caution hush to voiceless death
The truth that breathes within. Earth would not hold
One pulpit echoing like a parrot-cage
The thought-void accents of a rote-learn'd creed;
Nor heed one preacher like a cell-bound monk
Who, knowing men as boys in school know flowers,
Not as they grow, but pluck'd and press'd in books,
Would rather save the pictures of the soul
Sketch'd on some small cell wall, than one live soul
In whose free thinking God depicts himself.'
Thus oft the printer-preacher spoke,—a man
Full-hearted, fit to be a poet too,
And speak and write of what we now shall read."

SEEKING.

I.

My spirit, moving on to higher life,
At one sad place became a prey to strife;
For many oft would cross my path, and say
Their souls were moving in the better way;
And mere delusions had allured my feet
Along the course my faith had found so sweet.
At this, then, like a child, who turns to leave
The wranglings of his mates that make him grieve,
And rest his weary head upon that breast
Whose firm maternal love can bear it best,
My mind would turn to nature. Where but there
Could earth-born trouble find maternal care?
How long'd I to be hidden in the shade
Which the thick mantlings of her forests made,
And stay there undisturb'd by human thought,
Till sweet and soothing influences, brought
From sources far removed from man's control
Should cool the burning fever of my soul!

So, for a season bidding men farewell,
I dwelt alone within a grove-grown dell.

II.

Thence wandering forth one still clear night I found
Beneath the moon that rose up, large and round,
Through vistas opening like some temple's aisles,
Great trees that arched the moveless air for miles.
Their spreading boughs, like shadowy rafters, lined
A star-filled dome, and oft, where foliage twined
In leafy fretwork round each trailing limb,
Flash'd bright with dew. Beneath them, fair though dim,
About the trees' wide trunks, in half seen bowers,
And pushing up through paths I trod, were flowers.
I seem'd their nature's lord ; for, when my feet
Would crush them as I pass'd, they grew more sweet.

III.

Anon a brook before my vision spread.
It seem'd a path that fairy feet could tread,—
A path of silver, o'er a jewell'd ground,
Which far away toward heaven-like mountains wound.
White mists were clinging to the brook's bright side.
Like spirit bands I thought them, whom its tide

Lull'd softly, couch'd amid the dark-leaved trees,
Awaiting bugles of the morning breeze,
And all the rush of daybreak sweeping by,
To bear them off in glory to the sky.

IV.

At times, mysterious whurs of winds and wings
And whisperings rose, with long-drawn echoings.
'T was music, lingering lovingly along
The breeze its fragrance freighted, like a song
From bay-bound barks in hazy autumn calms ;
Nor less it sway'd my soul than slow low psalms,
Begun where organ blasts that roar'd and rush'd
And made the air-waves roll, are swiftly hush'd,
And our thrill'd breasts inhale as well as hear
The awe-fill'd sweetness of the atmosphere.

V.

How calmly did such sights and sounds impart
Their own deep calmness to my troubled heart !
With gratitude for each toy-touch of air
At play on my knit brow, I rested there.
But while I rested, lo, a stranger's form
Push'd through the white bars of the moonlight warm ;
And with a soft slow movement near me came,
The while his face, tho' mute, smiled forth to claim

Full sympathy with me ere either spoke ;
But soon his voice upon the silence broke :—

VI.

"Who loves not, where all shapes and sounds we test
So charm us by the mysteries they suggest,
To throw aside, or strive to throw, at least,
Beliefs that satisfy our times, and feast
On superstition, and half credit freaks
With which fair fancy lured those dreamy Greeks.
Our older age has dropt the young world's joys,
And takes life earnestly ; but it employs
Its ardor too much like an o'ergrown boy's,
Whose fist and arm so often plied in strife
But show his brain is weak. There are in life
Deep truths we value not. We rend apart
The forms of nature, but have little heart
To prize the hints to thought that meet our view.
And we forget that mysteries too are true ;
And we forget the bourn beyond the blue;
And we forget about the silent pall ;
And faith, which only holds the key of all,

VII.

"More wise it were to feel that Æolus
Here held the tempest back, so Zephyrus

Might tune for his fair wife, through long, dear hours,
Tones richer than the music of her bowers ;
Nor ever made discordant by wild showers
Or pipes of wilder winds. More wise it were
To thank the gods of woods and waves astir,
That here there come no Harpies to affright
The soul that longs to linger in delight,
That here no vultures' plumes and vipers' forms
Emerge from out the depths of streams and storms ;
That voices of the Sirens lure none here ;
Nor scorpion scourges, nor coil'd snakes appear
All matted o'er hags' faces, chuckling near
The grim-fix'd mask of Fate. Instead of these,
What joy to muse on passing Naiades !
And bands of those home-loving Dryades,
Call'd out to join the serenading groups
That gather round the sweet Hamadryad troops,
Or hear the Napææ, singing through the vale,
The while the Echo speeds her flight to hail
The long array of Oread choirs that give her
The mountain's answer to the sea and river.

VIII.

" More wise than doubting all, 't were e'en to think
That oft the Graces haunt this brooklet's brink,
With Fauns and all the rustic retinue
Of Bacchus ; or, as old engravers drew
On Pyrrhus's agate, at some greener spot,

Join'd hand in hand, all other cares forgot,—
The scroll and mask and lute that mark their craft,—
And merry o'er a fresh Castalian draft,
With voice and tread, the sacred nine aspire
To match in time Apollo's nervous lyre;
While through it all the reeds of Syrinx play,
And make harmonious each diverging lay."

IX.

He turn'd away; and I, who, well pleased, heard,
Could not but follow him. Without a word
We walk'd at first, like pilgrims near a shrine
They much revere, who, fill'd with thrills too fine
To throb through words accented, satisfy
Their souls by feeling that the god is nigh.
"Alas, how many a thought," he said at last,
"Whose accents reach us through the rustling blast,
Or meaning seems inscribed in circling rills,
And outlines of the rocks, the trees, the hills,
Is void of purport to the soul whose eyes
Have never yet been taught to know and prize
The purpose underneath! Forms can impart
Their import only to a feeling heart.

X.

"All things created can for thought procure
No more than one's creative thoughts conjure

From out their forms. A likeness in them speaks
To like in us, the while our spirit seeks
Close contact with their own. For nature is
Transparent, and reveals her mysteries
To mortals only whose own sympathies
Make them transparent, opening all between
Themselves and nature, so that naught can screen
Her inmost meaning from their inmost mind.
Such spirits in earth's round horizon find
A glass divine—like that called Claude Lorraine's—
A strange, strong lens that deep within contains
Heaven's forms for thought, made small in scope to match
Man's comprehension. But how few can catch
Heaven's meaning through the forms. How few so wise
That they can look beneath the rustling guise
Of Nature's vestments, and perceive below
The mind informing them, that makes them glow
With living truth. Alas, how many souls,
As blind to all that might be seen as moles,
Live, merely burrowing in earth's dust and gloom
To make their whole surroundings but a tomb
Wherein dead minds may lie. And yet how grand
Might life become, could all but understand
The thoughts that flow with brooks in every glade,
And grow to strengthen souls with every blade
Of verdure in the spring-time! Could they read

And know and use earth rightly, then, indeed,
Might heaven too open above them, while they too
Would cry like Paul, 'What wilt Thou have me
do?'

XI.

"We mortal men may all be priests, high priests
Of nature, who may gather in from beasts
And birds and creeping things, and sky, and earth,
That which each form reveals of truth or worth,
And, in our higher natures, find a speech
To voice the praise that thought can frame for each.
Can aught on earth give right supremacy,
Except this priesthood of humanity?
Where burn the altar-fires that can make pure
Earth's wrong and dross, and through their flames
insure
True worship for all forms of life or art,
If not enkindled in the human heart?

XII.

"Believe me, in humanity it is,
In charities, and kindly courtesies,
In eyes that sparkle, and in cheeks that blush
With love and hope and faith, which make them
flush,
That all the bloom and fruitage of the earth
Attain their consummation and their worth.

Deep underneath our nature is a power
That, pushing forth through soil and seed and flower,
Moves on and out through all of sentient life,
And struggles most in man ; nor can the strife
Be ended ever, till the force controls
The last least impulse that impels our souls.
E'en then this power, inspiring words and deeds,
Though check'd, at times, in customs or in creeds,
Anon bursts through all these to show the stress
Of that behind them which would thus express
Through finite forms that it is limitless."

XIII.

Here stealing silence from his final word.
Because I greatly prized the thoughts I heard,
I ask'd who was it thus communed with me.
"One who would lead your soul to faith," said he ;
"While studying nature and humanity,
You learn to trace the spirit's destiny."
"While studying humanity," I said,
"Some slight far grander interests overhead.
Their deep concern for human worthiness
Prompts earthly love not more, but heavenly less.—
Though you seem not for this cause to ignore,
But rather value God and heaven the more."

XIV.

"Why not?" he question'd. "Is God's coin a
fraud?
His impress can you see, and not be awed?
Should one not search His image?—for I fear
They see but sense who seek not spirit here."
"Alas," rejoin'd I, "once my soul essay'd
To seek Him thus, but it no progress made.
My thoughts of man in growing old, grow sad,
And learn the more, the more to learn of bad."
"And are you sure," he said, "that your complaint
Bespeaks a healthful mood? Is health so faint?—
The earth is not a heaven, nor man a saint;
But truths there are to which our faith may cling,
And trace with joy some good in every thing.

XV.

"There lifts a height," he said, "beyond this hill,
Where once, as runs the tale, with moveless will,
Judea's Christ was tempted to the wrong.
The paths that lead there are so rough and long
That few men ever mount them; but those few,
Amid clear heavenly air that aids their view,
In some strange way, to man a mystery,
May find reveal'd the whole world's history,
While all its kingdoms and its customs lie
As if a living map beneath the eye."

"But," ask'd I, "is a soul still tempted there?"—
"Yes," he replied, "but those who walk with care,
Are well repaid. Times come when men no more
Are tempted by what tempted them of yore."—

XVI.

He said this, then moved on with me awhile,
Until at last we reach'd a dark defile,
Through which a river dash'd; but soon the dell
Became a precipice, adown which fell
The spray-sent stream, then thunder'd its farewell
A thousand feet below. From where we stood
We watch'd it wind and gleam amid a wood,
Whose tree-tops far beneath us waved away,
Well swept by winds that made them sigh and sway
Across a sea-like space of hills and dales.
The high heaved peaks and all the deep-rent vales
Were bright with autumn's tints that end the year
Like sunset ending day. "The glories here
Bespeak translation and not death," said he.
"These leaves are bright as flowers that lure the bee
In orchards. When they fall, the limbs are clear
For life's fresh fruitage of the coming year.
So find I autumn's hues of gold and red
Worn by each season, ere the leaves are shed,
A mantle which the old year from the skies

Drops like Elijah's, and it prophesies
New life beyond to which all nature hies."

XVII.

Amid the scenes below, I sought to find
The grove where we had met. "How like in kind
Seem all things there!" exclaimed he. "'T were the same
If men we saw. Could one's peculiar claim
Ascend as high up even as are we?
For aye, the nearer heaven our view-points be,
The more of men's equality we see.
Yet here we cannot pause. Yon peaks that rise
From ridge to ridge like stairways through the skies,
Invite us upward. Note that farthest range,
Where shades, from clouds that seem too high for change,
Move slowly on with such solemnity,
Not like those near us, tripping merrily
To music of the swaying pines,—that height
Invites our presence, ere we part to-night.
We must move on and up"—which saying, then
He led me forward, it were hard to pen
Through what long wastes of ledge and brake and fen.

XVIII.

But on a high, broad cliff his quick gait ceast;
And thence, the while he pointed toward the east,

My eyes could see—upon a greener field,
Swept of the cumbering trees, and half conceal'd
By clouds of smoke as white as was its own
Pure marble hue—an altar; nor alone.
Soon, standing near it, where the air had clear'd
A white-robed multitude of priests appear'd,
And multitudes about them ranged in line,
And multitudes of victims, fowl and kine,
And, ever and anon, a listening ear
Some vagrant fragments of men's praise could hear,
Soft interrupted strains that stroked the air
As though vibrations from the wings of prayer.
Then, as I sought to learn the cause of all,
The altar-smoke that, ere this, like a pall
Had rested o'er it, rose afar and spread
Like Paribanou's tent, o'er every head
Unfolding far past all foretoken'd size.
Yet still the fumes unfolded, till the skies
Were black as when that drapery thick hung o'er
The pyre of dead Pompeii, lit of yore
By her fierce executioner, the grim
Vesuvius. Like that did this mass dim
All things except its own form hovering
Above the earth, and swiftly covering
The moon and struggling stars: but lo, ere long
'T was limb'd anew, the while a wind-blast strong
Rent from its ragged outlines threatening forms,
Whirl'd like tornadoes, torn from clouds in storms.

These then, that seem'd o'er half the earth to lower,
Were seen to be the arms of some vast power
That floated on the air: and soon behold
Their fingers far seem'd stretching off to mould
The yielding texture of the pliant space.
"Now watch," my guide said; "while on high they place
The stars call'd surges, and the earth, mirtlok,
And patals of the lower realm, where flock
The evil bands of Nardman. This is he,—
Great Brahma, who above the Indian sea
Once on the lotus lay, when truth began
To gild the dreams of youth, and guide the man.

XIX.

"Ah, thought was crystallized when came the world!
Be He the Nile-land Kneph, or He who hurl'd,
In frozen climes, the heat from Muspellheim
Within Ginnunga-gap, or One sublime,
Whose glories bursting through earth's dawn, in days
Of Grecian lore, awoke the Greek to praise,
There lives a Power on whom all nations call,
Before whom, in their hours of woe, they fall,—
A Spirit's presence, back of hill and plain,
That breathes and moves through all: and all in vain
Men seek for rest who pay to Him no vow

To whom the conscience feels impell'd to bow
And all its conscious energies devote.
In search of Him, in ages most remote,
The Hindoo, back of nature's robes could trace
A life he dared not name. Was His veil'd face,
One with Jehovah's of another race
That named Him not? whose aim was to redeem
This world from wretchedness, and wake a dream
Of night's ideals with day's real blessedness?—
And was He one with this Jehovah less
Because like bands that bound three Persian powers,
And onward sped the bright Egyptian hours,
The Hindoo, after ages, learned to add
A Siva to develop good from bad,
And Vichnu, Saviour, to his ancient One,
And form a Parabrahma, such as none
Could comprehend, a Trinity indeed,
Unlike, yet like that of the Christian's creed?
Ah, who that thinks, can yet believe it true
That earth has not a common Father?—who
Can deem that any soul is wholly driven
From light that blesses all. Some ray has given
Some glimpse to each one who has heavenward striven."

XX.

I look'd. The shape had vanish'd. In its place
Was naught but smoke, left there like folds of lace

About the skies, the while the stars, aglow,
Appear'd like sparks to burst from clouds below,
Exultant in their freedom. Then my guide
Had found a path, rock-bound on either side;
And through the rocks, from many a misty home,
Fleet torrents dash'd, and pass'd in spray and foam.
More genial, in more quiet nooks beneath,
Came cool, clear springs, amid green sod and heath,
Reflecting back the light that fill'd the sky.
Here, ere we far had walk'd, our feet drew nigh
Rocks wide-illumin'd. They were flush'd with light
That soon, I heard, stream'd out across the night
"From lamps that hung within a sacred cave
Carved round with signs that Zoroaster gave
For symbols to reveal from heaven its plan
To overthrow the power of Ahriman.
Well was it too that this great seer could find
A truth that, while enlightening every mind,
Could also warm the numbness of the heart,
And show wise Mithras, not with threaten'd art,
Forever striving to keep peace between
The white-mail'd Ormuzd and his foe obscene,
Dark Ahriman; but conqueror where all merit
Named sinless from Tschinevad, should inherit
Unclouded realms of light, in which once more
The good should reign supremely as of yore.

XXI.

"But Zoroaster was not last, nor first,
To learn of that by which the world is curst.
What earthly soul must not such shafts endure
As those of Typhon, Loki, Moisasure?
The well-made locks and legal barriers
By which the best philanthropist avers
Distrust in men; the long sad list of crimes
In lawyer's lore; the armies of all times
With men so elate to man them; anarchy
Whose brute force prostrates all prosperity
Till shot and steel instate it; toil that schemes
For self or steals another's; rest that dreams
Of vice and wakes in vileness; conscience, care,
Disease, and death,—alike one record bear;—
All show the trace of evil gone before,
Whose trail is clear to all, but clear yet more
To those who strive most hard to walk aright,
Yet walk misled where but the past sends light."

XXII.

We left the cave; but, long its glancing beams
Assail'd the trees, through boughs that draped the streams
Like shot-rent banners, where bright shafts of day
Clove through the yielding darkness of the way.
And then the valley open'd; and, once more,
We saw the mountain-summits as before.

And soon, upon the highest peak of all,
Some clouds appear'd. They seem'd, ere long, to crawl
Along the hights, and lengthen out, and show
Themselves the first of others gathering so,
Which soon closed up behind them. Then we heard
The moan of forests that above were stirr'd ;
Then nearer trees began to quake and sway ;
And with good cause ! for blackening all the way
A storm was coming on, with an array
As fierce as hosts of fiends might be, if sent
From hell to charge some heavenly battlement.
As fiercely, foully, did its forces try
To break the lines of light in earth and sky,
With sad success ! they carried each redoubt ;
And, bounding down with thunder-tread and shout,
On every side their weapons flash'd, and lash'd
The howling waste through which their fury dash'd.

XXIII.

Here, driven aside for refuge from the storm,
We came to men in divers dress and form,
Who kneel'd upon the ground ; and at their side,
I too had kneel'd, but seeing this, my guide
Said, as he led me toward a shelter near,
"These men are kneeling not in love but fear,
Lest, while the storm sweeps downward in its might,

An angry god be station'd on the hight.
Nor strange it is that there their fancy rears
Grim sceptr'd shadows of their human fears.
Not strange the ancient Greek deem'd peaks of his
The homes of Superhadean deities ;
That Spartans dared not brave Olympian rocks ;
Nor shepherds mount Amanus with their flocks ;
That Persians bow'd to Borj, and grand Meru
Subdued each haughty Brahmin Kooleenu.
Not strange that priests in many a land have striven
To prove their sacred creeds and codes were given
On mounts high o'er the earth as heaven's high
throne ;
And shown Palladia, which their temples own,
Oft carved with laws as changeless as their stone,—
Shown, lightning-sent, the thunder's Brontia,
Dread Dysares of hush'd Arabia,
Heliagabolus, Teutonic rainbow-urns,
The image for which robb'd Pessinus yearns,
And countless other symbols, all received,
Like Israel's, from the sky, as was believed.
But, think now, when the winds most fiercely blow,
And thunders roar, which is the man's worst foe,—
Self ?—or the lightning lighting up his woe ?
Which one of old to conscience was it spoke,—
Self ?—or the thunder that its fears awoke ?
And when the sinner felt his death was due
To One who own'd and claim'd his living too,

From what source in which love could not be shown
Came forth the thought that weakness could atone
For its own sin by using, not its own,
But other lives?—and how man's conscience prized
The peace that came where these were sacrificed,
What witness bear the altars, crimson-clad,
From Baal's, to Julian's Tauroboliad!"

XXIV.

"You yield," I interposed, "much reverence
To heathen worship." "Ay, for in a sense,
All worship," said he, "springs from what is true.
For if to sin it ever could be due,
Could grafts of true religion flourish now
Upon the old religious nature's bough?
But if, in spite of tendencies to sin,
We still believe men's motives pure within,
Then all that God has made appears to be—
Be leaf, limb, flower, or fruit the part we see—
Some perfect part still of life's perfect tree.
Believe me, there is faith so full and deep
That all the surface-doubts that o'er it sweep
Are fog-banks to its ocean,—fill the skies
Amid inactive hours, but shift and rise
With each new change that brings a sun or storm.
Our mortal doubts are conjured up by form,
Not substance, when weak insight fails to reach

Beneath the vapory whiffs of human speech.
They come to him whose wars are waged at words,
A knight, who at some whirring windmill girds
To wound the wind that whirls it, nor will know
That, back of all this realm of sound and show,
A subtle, unseen spirit works, which all
Material means are far too weak and small
To hold or image ; that the spirit's life
Has power within it to survive all strife
Of forms, at best, but fashion'd from the dust,
Whose changing creeds are not men's constant trust.
So better did our spirits not despise
Their fellows. Under each most foul disguise
That e'er deserved a prophet's curse or sighs,
The truth may lurk, and not be wholly mute,
But teach of love, sin's heaven-crown'd substitute,
And faith, and hope, and life, by which men rise
From step to step to all the soul can prize."

XXV.

While thus he spoke, the skies had clear'd once more,
And through a mountain-clove, as through a door
Hung green at Christmas time, far down below
A fair vale open'd ; and we strove to go
Where all could well be view'd ; then reach'd a place
Cloud-high above a plain, where rose apace

A flood, and swept around the hills like that
Which once encircled lonely Ararat,
When first that flood had ceased, long wonder'd at,
The while men spoke by different names of one
Seisithrus, Noah, or Deucalion,
And signs in every land of ship and dove
Recall'd the flood and all the Father's love.
We stood there long, and watch'd the watery strife.
Then, where more danger came to threaten life,
He pointed out as Typhon and his wife
Dark forms whose crafty steps in caution pass'd
Amid high bushes bending in the blast.
Anon, they push'd a chest out o'er the storm
Which spell-bound held Osiris's fair form,
The savior of the race they would destroy.
Their deed perform'd, they turn'd with guilty joy
And sped away; but where the flood made green
The shores it laved, great Thoth, with glances keen
Had come to stay its rise. And scarce his face
Had turn'd to note their deed, ere toward the place
A third form moved. 'T was veil'd in mystic light,
But through the veil, anon, there met our sight
Fair eyes that shone behind some surface tears
Less dimm'd than starlight when the rain-cloud
clears.
In spite of grief dishevelling every tress,
How beautiful was Isis in distress!
She sought her spouse Osiris, help'd in this

By faithful but abortive Anubis ;
And soon, the while she learn'd the truth from
Thoth,
Prov'd how the gods can love whom they betroth.
The surging storm within her flush'd her face,
Dash'd sparkling to her eyes, and sway'd with
grace
Her frame, which, at the pulses' overflow,
Thrill'd visibly to feel the force below.
She waved her hand toward heaven. The winds
were hush'd,
Light burst the sky ; and waves that wildly rush'd
Against our mount, fell backward with the tide ;
While far away, across the waters wide,
Appear'd safe on the shore the missing chest
Which those receding waves had left at rest.

XXVI.

" Her sacred lips have prophesied, anew,"
My guide said, as the vision sank from view,
" The time for Horus to avenge and save
The wrong'd Osiris, rising from his grave
To call upon his followers on the earth
To take his name, and share in his new birth.
How oft of old such prophesies have cheer'd
The hearts of men, as in their sky appear'd
Some rainbow to remind them of that love
Which girdled Noah's world, and still above

And round about them, saves from sadder waves
Than ever closed above mere earthly graves!
How oft in ages past have men been told
Of one triumphant in the days of old,—
Some Buddha, Cæsar, Arthur, who should spring
From death to be once more earth's more than king,—
The dream of art that struggles to reveal
Its form in marble pure as its ideal,
The dream of faith that looks in him to find
The way, the truth, the life of all mankind.

XXVII.

"If this, indeed, of other men were true,
What profit then," I asked him, "had the Jew?"—
"Much everyway, but chiefly," answer'd he,
"He had the oracles, believed to be,
Amid the ignorance of surrounding night,
An earnest ever of a coming light.
God chose this race, you say, but did His charge
Of it make Him neglect the world at large?
Might not the Spirit speak through laws made known
Within each heart? Were these reveal'd alone
Within the written word? Might not His will,
Intent on purposes He would fulfil
Through human means, at first selections make,
And guard the truth,—not wholly for the sake

Of Israel; nor for an exclusive cause,—
By one peculiar people's life and laws?
And where in all of history, tho' one traces
Amid all kinds of castes and clans and races,
Is ever found a stabler element?—
Of all the men against mutation bent,
In spite of court or church or sword or flame,
But one, the Jew, forever stays the same.

XXVIII.

"Yet even he could live, as years passed on,
His destiny forgetting, and, anon,
Like Esau, sell for gains of little worth
The mission that was his by right of birth,—
To minister to all men; and could call
His nation's Lord the guardian, not of all,
But of the Jew,—tho' later prophecies
Had always join'd the Gentile's name to his.
And thus he turn'd from Him whose power above
Had ne'er reveal'd partiality of love,
Nor truth that was not some development
Of promises to all earth's children sent
When earth's first parents look'd for one whose worth
Should crush the sin-born serpent of the earth:—
He turn'd from Him, whose ministers, I ween,
Urge none in heathen lands to choose between
The good and ill, without attesting so

That God's good Spirit strives with all below.
If Jews, who read His law and sacrificed,
Were saved by faith in Him ; the uncircumcised
With faith in Him would scarce unheeded go,
Because they but the higher law could know.

XXIX.

"Why, think you, that, of old, divine command
Sent only Jonah to a heathen land?
Why, that God's prophets could high praise allot
To some who yet of Israel's God knew not?
Was Paul a sophist at Mar's Hill to own
That Greece could worship Him, altho' unknown?
Or did the Christ say, but to play with truth
And please that vain Samaria, forsooth,
That not within Jerusalem alone
Was truth confined, for every land could own
The spirit's truthful worship? Might not He
Whose good accepts the good where'er it be,
And reads the inmost motives of the mind,
In 'every nation, people, kindred,' find,
Thron'd e'en behind the idols of each race,
Ideals that human art could not make base?
How sad if not! This world's theology
Scarce blows a trumpet causing piety
To kneel, ere out from opening mystery
Sweeps forth, full mail'd, the world's idolatry.
It is not he of heathen name alone

Who bows his knee to gilt and wood and stone.
Where live the souls who seek God's living truth
Whom priest-craft does not find, and praise, forsooth,
Its own deeds, which it claims must lead the way
And meditate for all men while they pray?
Alas for man, thus made to look to man!—
Just charity with kindlier eye might scan,
Amid Athenian gods, a Socrates,
Who would not bow in spirit e'en to these."

XXX.

While thus he spoke, I, dead to sight and sound,
Had walk'd abstracted, till I mark'd around
Strange shadows quivering over all the ground,
The which, anon, far darker would be made.
They startled me; for what had caused the shade?
No tree nor cliff about us rose between
The moon-light and ourselves to form a screen.
But when I glanc'd above, there met my sight
As high as clouds could be, as wild a light
As ever man could see,—light coming not
From moon or stars; one could not judge from what.
As lightning were, if constant, so it glared
Athwart the sky, and tore and cross'd and flared.

XXXI.

That strange scene lasted long; but yet the moon
In time came forth again. Then climbing soon

Some mighty ledges, we at last survey'd
From distant heights the forms that caused the shade :
We saw the giant ash Yggdrasil now
That loom'd with many a thick and swaying bough
Above the plain through which our feet had pass'd.
But think not leaves that had the shadows cast
Had bridg'd but our short pathway, and no more.
The limbs were leagues in length, and rose to soar
Above the earth like mountain-forests wide,
Yet cloud-borne, needing not a mountain-side.
They cover'd all the north, yet hung as high
Above the darkness of the western sky ;
And far off through the east they stretch'd away
Till flushing at the touch of coming day.
Ah, where was ever aught like this tree seen !
Beside it, a mere wind-bent twig, I ween
Was that Aswatha by the Hindoo known,
Or Persia's Gogard, or the Zampuh grown
In Thibet—figured o'er with mystic signs
Which made but little wise their wise divines—
Or Eden's too, reputed to have grown
The seeds of these through every nation sown.

XXXII.

Of them my guide discours'd, the while we scann'd
Yggdrasil's roots ; one in the west where band
The fiends of darkness in their foul Mistland :

And there the serpent lies like lengthen'd night,
And gnaws the bark, nor sates his appetite ;
And one was in the north where Frost-Kings
dwell,
And drafts of wisdom drink from Mimir's well,
While ever in its crystal depths below
The cool brain sees the mirror'd pole-star glow ;
And one was in the east, hard by the morn
And Urdar-fountain, where the patient Norn
Perceives the present, future, and the past,
Nor slights the small, nor shudders at the vast.
Thence, heaved from earth to heaven, bridged o'er
the dark,
The rainbow-bifrost bends, on which we mark
Its warden, Heimdall, who his vigil keeps
With marvellous ears, which, even while he sleeps
With birdlike lightness, hear the grasses grow
And wool on sheep ten thousand miles below !
Beyond his place uploom high Asgard-homes
Of gods, and Gladsheim with its golden domes.
There too, along Idavollr's wondrous fields,
Vingolf appears, which hush'd retirement yields
For Frigga and her suite,—a wilderness
Of lawns and lanes and arbors numberless,
Dim nights of groves and glowing days of flowers,
And lakes and streams and fairy fountain showers,—
A place where wish could every want confess,
And all desire be drugged in drowsiness.

XXXIII.

But while I gazed upon that scene, behold,
A storm arose. Its thunders, while they roll'd,
Woke Heimdall, who, anon, on Gulltopp rode
Like lightning to Valhalla, the abode
Of mighty Odin. Then each hill and plain
Seem'd filled with gods, who moved with signs of pain.
Here Tyr uplifts, like some vast mountain-side,
His heaven-high shield that shakes with wounded pride.
There Ullur aims his bow to test his art,
And meteors through remotest regions dart.
Now Braji leaves his wife, Iduna fair,
For Forseti; and toward them in despair
Comes Freyja with her plaintful team of gray,
And Vidar, Vali, Njörd, all join the fray,
While through the north, like an Aurora, gleam
The spears of Skadi's troops that nearer stream.
Far up in Hlidskjalf, towering o'er the crowds,
Like some fair morning sunburst o'er the clouds,
Bright Odin stands, and prompt at his command
Convulsions dash the sea and shake the land,
Where comes great Thor, whose chariot sweeps the sky,
On wheels of fire far flashing as they fly,
Eclipsing all those rival hosts of light
As thunder-storms blot out the stars of night.

XXXIV.

But what had roused the gods ?—I gazed below,
And there beheld a mighty waste of woe.—
The serpent, Nidhögg, with new malice lash'd
The sea surrounding all things, till it dash'd
O'er all the shores. The great tree's giant form,
Amid the waves and winds of that wild storm,
Sway'd to and fro, till with a mighty crash
Its trunk was rent, the while a blinding flash
Of lightning tore apart the upper sky,
And fired the great tree's limbs that hung on high,
As if an orb of flame, or comet whirl'd
Against what might become a bursting world,
Tho' yet the crash came not. Its flashing drew
Fire-genii from the depths who fiercely flew
To tear the bifrost down. More dread than these,
Huge giants weeding up the shaken trees,
And rending from the earth the crumbling cliffs,
Press toward the gods, who through the smoke that lifts,
Advance their blazing lines ! Of no avail
Is now their show of strength ! For once they fail ;
For once can force more dread than gods' assault ;
And, almost ere they charge, the columns halt ;
Then back through many a lengthening league they roll ;
Then, wheeling, bend their rivals like a scroll.
Borne back again, for one more charge they form,

As terrible as every earthly storm
Concenter'd into one. On, on they bound,
And meet—O soul, to have outlived that sound!—
Nor heaven nor hell could stand so fierce a shock;
But all things,—god and giant, star and rock,
And sky and earth, with bursting fires were hurl'd
Like lava through the air! then all the world
Seem'd smoke, so dense I felt it on me press.
Then still was all, and all was nothingness.

XXXV.

How long this gloom had place, no man could tell.
Bewilder'd by the scene and shock I fell,
And swoon'd away. When came again the light,
My guide was by me, and he calm'd my fright.
"Note now," he said, "the end, and lay to heart
How like seeks like, and good and evil part."

XXXVI.

He bade me mark then a commotion slight
Amid the clouds about us which the light
Would here and there flash through. And, gazing long,
I saw two currents flowing deep and strong.
The one pass'd up, and drew from every side
All bright things after it; the other hied
With all the darker forms toward depths below,—

Forms it would tear from all the air, as though
Some chemic force would thus precipitate
Each essence to a predetermined fate.
And soon I seem'd,—I wist not how—to heed
With every mote that rose or fell some deed,
And, clinging to each deed, a shadowy frame;
Then, as if causing each, real spirits came,
Form'd like the shadows, in all parts the same.
Some sank below; and some, with looks of love,
Would follow all frames like their own above.

XXXVII.

To what place moved they? As their forms pass'd by
I gazed above, and through the open sky,
Amid encircling glory, could descry
A city rear'd for those whose deeds were right,
Beyond all beauty beautiful. The sight
No man could see, and deem one other bright.
All earth's light, pass'd through one lens, could but blot
The brilliance of those pinnacles; and not
In all things else that e'er my soul could awe
Was aught suggested like what then I saw.

XXXVIII.

How could I turn now from a scene like this
And gaze below, and thus forget my bliss?—
Yet soon my eyes were lured to seek the place

Where souls descending went. This made me face
Not what I so had fear'd. I could but see
A far off brightness, which appear'd to me
To rift the shadows of surrounding night,
And fill at once both heaven and earth with light.
Then, too, I noticed that, though all the world
To swift entire destruction had seem'd hurl'd,
That sad scene passing by, had left me still
Unharm'd, and standing yet upon the hill.
"Whence comes that light?" I ask'd then of my guide.
"Go we to seek the source?" "Nay," he replied,
As it illumin'd all his face, and drew
Rays from his eyes like those in morning dew:
"Like lesser lights this light of life is nigh
To see by, not to handle, lest we die.
And while it makes the paths before us bright
'T is our work to advance from sight to sight."

XXXIX.

Then, moving forward soon, we reached a ledge
And pass'd around it, and the sharp steep edge
Grew skyward back of us, until its hight
Had hid what now my guide declared "the light
By means of which, e'en through the night's dim air,
We had divined those visions everywhere.
But now," he said, "this mountain back of us
Towers up above a vale not lighted thus."

XL.

With this, he led me onward, where the gloom
Hung thick o'er all things like a veil of doom.
But through this veil we had anon discern'd
Bare fields but seldom by the plowshare turn'd ;
Where, closely guarded, every human hut
Against wild beasts or wilder men seem'd shut.
The men, ill-shaped, bore features none could trust ;
And lived for plunder, and to pander lust ;
Nor fear'd for aught save chieftains, who would rise
And lead them forth to battle where their cries
Would fill the air, the while, with brawn that bled,
They fell'd their foes, who yielded, sometimes dead,
Or, worse than dead, were into bondage led,
And loaded with huge weights, and scourg'd and spurn'd,
And ever kept in fear, until they turn'd
And took revenge, and thus brought on, once more,
A fiercer fight. I yearn'd then to implore
My guide to take me thence ; but, ere I spoke,
Off through the clouds that fell apart, there broke
A light like dawn's that made the gloom there cease,
And burst like sunlight o'er a land of peace.
Its fields were till'd, its home-doors open wide,
And, as the day broke o'er it like a tide,
Face after face awoke to smiles that blush'd,
Far lovelier than the clouds the sunrise flush'd.

XLI.

"This light so blessèd," said my guide, "to see,
Shines o'er a land where truth has made men free.
For all men, to their own best natures true,
Learn soon to let truth rule their fellows too.
So here the chains that on the bondmen clank
Are loosed, and slaves may reach the noblest rank;
And every field grows richer for the toil
Of yeomen working well their own-held soil.
Their very king, at last, has come to plan
The common welfare like a common man.
See too where ships for savage isles are steer'd,
How soon the church and school-house have been
rear'd!
E'en trade is made by winds from heaven above
To join men in the bonds of trust and love.
But think you gains that thus bring all men good
Are prized by all?"—And then from where we stood
He bade me closely watch the throngs I saw.
"Not all have spirits to discern God's law
Fulfill'd in what inspires to lives of truth
The soul God rules," he said. "This age, forsooth,
Is like the Christ's. Untaught that powers divine
Work most within, it seeks a form, a sign."

XLII.

With this he pointed to a path in view
Where many flock'd, and still the number grew.

A loud disputing throng they were, where each
Seem'd bent to draw from all within his reach
A train of followers, trying as he talk'd
To make men leave the friends with whom they walk'd
And join with his. The crowd thus moved along,
Was borne at last, where all the streaming throng
Spread, sea-like, surging here toward towering walls
Of vast cathedrals, there toward smallest halls,
And proved in various ways their piety,—
Bow'd, kneel'd or pass'd each doorway silently,
Some clasping there the hands of friends, and some
Their own hands, as if waiting love to come.

XLIII.

While still we watch'd them, one who came to us
Cried out in rage: "This age, so impious,
Dethrones the Lord, and boasts it can be free.
As if the truth He sends from heaven could be
Reveal'd by man, it rends, in doubtful search,
The forms that once made one the one true church,—
A church the home of all that hope has taught,
Or faith has felt, or love and grace have wrought,
On earthly floods the ark that saves the soul.
How blest its halls, and its divine control,
Where youths' unfolding natures learn to pray,
And move through life in heaven's appointed way!
How blest its reverent rites,—the quiet throng,

The pealing organ and the mutual song !
And, after praises, prayers and wise advice,
The still walk home, and earthly paradise !
Accursèd surely is their heresy,
Who would make less its high authority.
Accursèd would the world be, did their strife
Throne lawlessness above mere lawless life."

XLIV.

" And are you sure that what you prize rules less
Because of that which gives your soul distress ? "
My guide replied then.—" There are those who claim
This very freedom best fulfils His aim
Who heads the church. He sought to move mankind
Through moving unseen springs of love behind
Man's thought and deed. His church, assuredly,
Were but like Him if seeking unity
Not in the mask that hides whatever strife
Disturbs the soul, but in the inward life.—
You fear that skies aglow with liberty
Attend some sun that sets in anarchy.
Alas, too often men mistake the light
Of coming day for that of coming night.
But trust me, friend, wherever lifting skies
Impel deep slumbering souls to wake and rise

And press toward nobler things that then they view,
The church or nation that there lets them do
Their best to make their best ideals true,
Brings forth more worth from every character
Than all the rites and codes that ever were.
God's laws are inward, and they most control
Those left most free to serve what moves the soul;
But what earth's rulers force men to fulfil
Oft flows from but one headstrong human will."

XLV.

"Alas," rejoin'd the first, "for truth you search,
Yet find no good, nor profit in the church."
"Ay," said the other, "much good, every way;
As was the synagogue, our church to-day
Is bless'd by truth well proved; but can you deem
That all the springs that flow to swell the stream
Of ever-living truth are far away
As where fair Eden's first clear water lay?
Are there no nearer mountain-sides and plains,
O'erflowing with their stores from present rains?
Is there no rock struck now by prophet's hands
To meet in barren fields the new demands
Of thirsting souls, who find the stream of thought
Polluted by the debris caught and brought
From long past ages? Think you, friend, that naught
Has dimm'd with new alloy the modern phrase,

And that it still makes clear thought's ancient phase?
Nay, may not one's own thinking, too, debase
The soul's pure springs of God's inspiring grace?
If so, can one be wise, and take no thought
Of what another spirit has been taught?
Believe me, whatsoe'er has pass'd away,
Of temple-service or of priestly sway,
'T is well the church, our synagogue, remains
Wherein each soul from other souls obtains
Interpretations, varied with each mood,
Of truth that else might not be understood.
No single man could know, so Israel thought,
The whole mind of the Spirit. Hence each sought
To supplement his truth by charity
Which heeds what all report. How righteously
Could we in all that all men know rejoice!
They serve the church who serve the Spirit's voice."

XLVI.

To this the stranger answer'd with the plea,
"So many claim it, where can this voice be?"
"A nation may be form'd," my guide replied,
"Of those whom race and circumstance divide,
And yet be one, if one power hold control,
Enforcing general laws that rule the whole.
You deem the church divided? Who are you,
So sure how God may best preserve in view
The truth that love must rule in all things true?

Our faith in forms may trust a God-void shrine,
Where nothing that is worshipped is divine ;
May look to human systems, made to fit
Not all the truth, but only part of it,
To finite frames wherein the infinite lies
Defined so well that, in the compromise
Betwixt the faith and form, whate'er we view,
Contracted, clipp'd, and only half way true,
Is wholly harm'd. Ah, when shall mortals learn
That truth is grander than the earthly urn
To which they would confine it, or conceive
That wisest laws in states or churches leave
Each man to govern rightly his own soul
And thus, through practice, nurture self-control ?
When shall men strive to find a wiser way
Of warfare, than, with hostile ranks at bay,
To turn from these, and with the corps contend
That on their own side their own cause defend ?
What if corps-colors differ ? Loyal hearts
May cherish and advance through better arts
Their church,—the cause of truth ; for naught, forsooth,
Thrives less where force restrains it than the truth.

XLVII.

"And truth the sovereign is, not speech, nor sect.
Who love God's truth love God. So I detect
That naught can train more truthful piety

Than earnest thought, awaiting patiently
In heaven's own light each heavenly mystery.
But priestcraft oft has tender'd to the soul
What so apportions out divine control
That he who would receive it, must profess
To know all truth that heaven or earth can bless.
And yet can aught that men serve reverently
Be void of deep dark voids of mystery?
Can aught that leads our souls toward life above
Train human worth by knowledge more than love?
If but to know, gave souls their victory,
Where were the need of faith, hope, charity?
What but the last of these can lead aright
The spirits that not yet can walk by sight?
What wisest words that angel lips could speak,
If void of this, were ever else than weak?"

XLVIII.

As thus he spoke my eyes once more were brought
To watch the place those worshippers had sought.
And soon, where stood some vast cathedral tower,
Or church hid like a cottage in a bower
Beneath wide-branching trees, anon, would pour
Out from a deep-sunk porch, or opening door
An overflow of crowds that coursed inside.
Some swept forth thus, like foam upon a tide,
Were borne to other doors; but many pass'd
Out wholly from the place. Of these, at last,

A few, far drifting near to where we stood,
Proclaim'd aloud the reason and the mood
That moved them thus. "None know the truth,"
they cried,
In tones that all replies to them defied.

XLIX.

"We here," one spokesman said, "like most I ween,
Were drawn away from saints of humble mien
To those that seem'd most zealous to be seen ;—
To noisy throngs, who pray'd for peaceful boons
As if heaven's pity craved their shrieks and
swoons ;
Or else, to preachers who, while crowds admired,
Preach'd what to be admired thus, had inspired."
"We heard intoned," another said, "a sound
Which print, pass'd Providentially around,
Reveal'd to be a weary train of praise.
Now priests, now choirs would chant ; but few
would raise
A tribute that could voice all men's desire.
Soft throats alone seem'd thankful for much hire ;
Or else, as if the words were moved by fear,
Were wailing wildly, in a place made drear
By smoke and candles and a soulless dearth
Of light, as if stain'd windows by their worth
Could make heaven seem more dear than such an
earth."

"And some, we saw," one cried, "whose foremost care
Appear'd the head,—should it be shorn of hair?
Or never shorn?—or should the head be bare?
Or crown'd with hats whose brims were broad or spare?
Then all of these were one with those, we found,
Concern'd to know how saints could best be gown'd,—
In vestments rich or rude, as white or bright
As daybreak or as dark or dull as night?
As if, forsooth, a mere material guise
Could ever veil the spirit from the eyes
Of Him men worship, or, by outward show,
Atone for wrong still strong in souls below.
Can it be true that sin can disappear
From lives made right but to the eye and ear?
What can their spirits be but dead, indeed,
Who neither feel their faith nor think their creed?"

L.

Thus with a captious, grave, or angry air
These all had turn'd and left that place of prayer,
Where differing creeds and rites men war'd about
Had roused within them but distaste or doubt.
How could there be so much despondency
Where once hope sought for faith so eagerly?
Yet some seem'd wholly driven to despair;
And fled afar; and, flying, hasted where

Their pathways ended o'er a deep abyss ;
And, ere they mark'd its unseen precipice,
Too late to save them from the fate they fear'd,
Their shrieks rang out, and then they disappear'd.

LI.

"Ah," sighed my guide, "whose wisdom does not know
That earth, not heaven, has made religion so?
With life a mystery of mysteries,
What comfort has the soul that thoughtful is,
Except as it may trust that inmost law
From which all forms their vital forces draw?
How many forms may that law yet make one!
When days are newly lighted by the sun,
The clouds it kindles in the eastern sky
Are but the swamp's foul vapors lifted high,
And all the brilliance of the lightning's fire
Is forged from vapors oozing o'er the mire.
So, when life's last grand sunrise gilds our night,
And heaven's wide opening gates flash forth their light,
Who knows what forms on earth may be the first
To catch the glories that shall o'er us burst?
With all our boasts, life is not perfect yet ;
Nor are all forms within which truth is met
Transparent to reveal its hidden worth ;
Nor large enough to hold it, when from earth

It springs toward heaven. The safeguards fram'd
around
The sprout when first it starts to leave the ground,
Now that it presses upward and about
And from its narrow frame is bursting out,—
Can these that held the twig in, hold the tree?
Or think you life a force that can endure,
And never change, nor ever grow mature?

LII.

"At least, doubt not that many an earnest mind,
May find pure truth, in spite of frames that bind
His thought to forms. A publican may use
Vain rites that oft the truth of heaven abuse,
Yet breathe through each dead body of a prayer
Sighs that infuse a living spirit there;
And he whose faith in freest ways may roam
Have constant yearnings for some churchly home.
Ah, they who trust in God's most sovereign might
Find much to do, if they would do the right;
And they who trust the power of human will,
Oft fail, and feel their need of mercy still.

LIII.

"Truth's warriors in a mighty host advance,
Whose lines with wings of infinite expanse
Now rout, and now seem routed by the foe.
Smoke-wrapt amid the fight, no man can know

If most he should exult in drums that beat
For forward movements, or for full retreat.
The line near by him may but backward roll
To shape the slow sure progress of the whole.
If so, surmising where he can not prove
How all things toward life's final victory move,
His faith need not lose all its confidence,
Tho' it surrender every old defence.
Heaven's truth were small, if naught it brings could be
Outside the mental range of such as we.

LIV.

"And what are theories worth, except so far
As each can make men better than they are?
When souls have grown to truth, their nurture needs,
Ere growth can pass beyond it, growing creeds.
But e'en with these, what words that influence choice
Can sound all accents of the 'still small voice'?
Can human phases fully satisfy
Divine requirements? Let men only sigh
For God as Father in the home above,
Or as the earthly Son whose life was love,
Or as the Spirit sent to woo the soul;
Still may the truth, though not all known, control,
Howe'er their lips may limit and confine it,
Their whole lives, while they struggle to divine it.

Let thought-built systems fail each modern test;
On truth beneath all systems faith may rest,
On truth unshaken by earth's changing facts,
Inspiring pure desires and generous acts,
Where spirit reigns alone, and through all creeds
Impels all good men toward the self-same deeds,
Who learn that though their words be contrary,
All worthy souls have inward sympathy.

LV.

"And yet, will all men's thinking never find
That which can satisfy the questioning mind?—
Will never a Magellan sail around
This grander globe of truth, till he have found
How paths that part most widely sometimes tend
To bring two souls together in the end?
Our human thought, whose efforts, aim'd afar,
Have learn'd so much of sun and moon and star,—
'T is time it tell us mortals what we are.
'T is time our wandering world's philosophy
Discern life's inward bond of unity,—
Not like the Greek in mere material fire,
But in the soul's unquenchable desire.
'T is time it weigh the worth of arguments,
That treat each consciousness with reverence;
And, starting with the soul's first certainty,
Evolve in all its order'd symmetry
The universal law of sympathy.

'T is time the Spirit of the living force,
Whose currents through the frame of nature course,
And make the earth about, and stars above,
The body and abode of infinite Love,
That breathes its own breath through our waiting frames
With each fresh breeze that blows, and ever aims
Our lesser lives where all we call advance
But plays within its lap of circumstance,—
'T is time the Spirit should be known, in truth,
Inspiring hope in age and faith in youth,
And in us all that charity benign,
Which in us all would make us all divine."

LVI.

He paused, then said, " Each reverential star
Draws back where comes the sun. My home is far.
Now that our feet approach once more the dell
Where first we met, I must away, farewell."
And scarce I heard this, ere he had withdrawn.
But I, who walk'd and watch'd the opening dawn,
Moved homeward like one waking from a dream ;
And, as my mind recall'd my joy supreme
To see those visions that had fill'd the sky,
I had resolved, long ere the sun was high,
That whatsoever truth had thus been shown
Should not be left to bless myself alone.

NOTE FIFTH.

Again the people met, and now to hear
The soldier's tones, full, rich, and flexible,
Sound all the changes of their varied notes,
The while he fondly read the poet's lines
Inspired to mount the heights, and delve the depths,
And compass all the length and breadth of love.
"Well nigh to middle life our friend had come."
The soldier said, "ere he would heed at all
The calls appealing only to his heart.
For years, hard battling to maintain the fight
For food and clothing, then for years intent
To share his week-day gains, as well as all
His Lord's-day rest, with others who appear'd
In soul and body poorer than himself,
He had no time to wed, nor think of it.
Whate'er his mood, but seldom was he seen
To turn and watch God's beauty in a face,
Or blush anon with inward kindled fires

To feel the flatteries breath'd from women's lips.
But, just ere middle life, there cross'd his way
A sweet epitome of womanhood
With gentle hazel eyes, brown wavy hair,
And full red lips, through which flow'd soft and low
Words richly color'd by the warmth within,
As was the face that flush'd in uttering them.
And underneath that open face there seem'd
A nature moved by all that moved his own,—
His thoughts, his hopes, his projects for mankind.
What could he do but love it? Still for months
Love's course through dubious channels flow'd along,
With currents changed, anon, from slow to swift,
And yet with slight advance, till suddenly
There came the calmness of the open sea,
Where all the restless rills found peace at last,
As pure as heaven's own light that in them slept.
How sweet the echoes of the changing stream
Ring through the rhymes before me! But enough.
Their harmonies will charm you for themselves."

OVING.

I.

Under the light of a summer sky,
Swept of clouds as the sun was high,
Came a presence, ere long, to be
More than all things else to me;
More than all, for its light and shade
Changed the world with the life they made;
Changed the field I had till'd with care
Into a garden sweet and fair.
Never so sweet were the warm bright hours,
Never so fair were the bursting flowers.

Under the spell of that new delight,
What could I do but pause at the sight,
Pause to wonder, and cull and save
Some of the sweets that life then gave?
Here they are: they may hint to few
Aught of the glory in which they grew:
Only the stalks of an old bouquet,
Colorless, faded, gone to decay,—

Still they are dear for the joys they bore
While they were blooming in days of yore.

II.

Over the hills the breeze of May
Came, its fragrance bringing.
Over the meadows all the day,
Birds in the boughs were singing.

Out of my door the breeze's floods,
Glowing with sunshine, bore me,
Out where the branches were bowing, and buds
Parted like lips before me.

Out of my breast for a world so fair,
Blithe as the May-life springing,
Out of my breast and into the air
All my soul seem'd winging,

Winging like spirits that through the breeze
Flew to the earth that drew them,
Touching the trembling leaves like keys,
Playing a music through them.

Then, as if meant to meet my moods,
Came a maiden, wending
Down through a path that clove the woods,
Into the town descending.

To and fro the folds of her gown,
With fair little feet below them,

To and fro and up and down
Daintily swung to show them.

Heap'd in her hat were blossoms rare,
Shedding their fragrance round her,
While, like a halo of gold in her hair,
Only the sunshine crown'd her.

Then, as nearer she drew, her face
Clear'd from a shade of tresses,
Fair as a dawn that breaks apace
Out of a cloud's recesses.

Shone a light in her dark, deep eye
Pure as a star, when shining
Far in a sky whose depths defy
All but a god's divining.

So she pass'd, and her flower-leaves flew,
None could have told one whether
Drawn by her, or by drafts that drew
Both through the world together.

All of nature with rhythmic beat
Seem'd at one with her swaying,
Keeping time to her fair young feet,
The beat of her heart obeying.

Ah, thought I, since the world was new,
All its whirling and humming,

All its working, and waiting too,
Meant that she was coming.

III.

O could these hands of mine
But clasp a form so sweet;
O could I know the joys divine
Of a love for once complete!
She is the fairest flower of all
Earth can ever discover
She is the fruit of the world to fall
Into the hands that love her.

IV.

What is the use of our living,
If living be but to exist,
And nothing to others be giving,
Which, were we away, would be miss'd?

What is the use of our learning,
And toiling to come to the right,
If none can know we are yearning
To lead their spirits to light?

What is the use of possessing
A charm of form or of face,
If these be never expressing
A love that others can trace?

What is an outward attraction,
What is a power to control,
If men through the guise of our action
See nothing of God in the soul?

v.

Outward gains bring only a show
Gleaming in bubbles a breath can blow.
All the glitter that ever they make,
Flashing or dashing away as they break,
All is as nothing, unless men find,
Within and without them and broader in kind,
The light enlightening soul and mind.
Love alone is the sun-bright air,
Filling the bubbles, and making them fair,
And shining on, when they all have burst,
As brightly as when it lighted them first.

vi.

How oft in the night, 'mid the wind's wild sweep
Through the leaf-hung trees, or the spray-flung deep,
My eye sees not, but a light will gleam
Like an angel-face in an angel-dream;
And back through the years
My hush'd soul hears
The call of a tone
Like the spirit's own;
And I feel the press

Of a lost caress,
And of lips that bear
Both a kiss and a prayer
For my cheeks that glow as my pulses thrill.
Ah, is it a wonder my eye should fill?
I feel, whatever my life may be,
That one in the past had love for me;
When, dear as a boon from a realm of the blest,
My soul was press'd
To my mother's breast.

VII.

How oft with an old but strange delight,
I awake and turn when the day grows bright;
But O, no arm o'er my neck is thrown,
No soft, warm breath is fanning my own.
I feel but a draft of the passing air
That drifts through the window to lift my hair.
I hear but the breeze
That is whispering where
It plays with the trees.
The mate of my boyhood in days long past
I loved with a love that could not last.
He has left me for life;
And far away with children and wife,
He shows not, knows not, would not crave
The old, old love that sleeps in its grave.

VIII.

How oft, when many a soul I meet
For labor or for pleasure,
With a strange delight my heart will beat
A soft but stirring measure.

A sacred charm surrounds the bloom
Of cheeks that glow before me,
Far sweeter than the flower's perfume
In springtime ever bore me.

The smiles their lips leave unconfined,
Their movements as I view them,
Appear but shades of a life behind,
And I can half see through them.

Ay, oft I hide my eyes apace
Beneath my eyelids' awning;
Too bright behind each flushing face
A holy light seems dawning.

Each eye I see appears a lens,
Through which, with stolen glances,
A realm divine my spirit kens,
Which all my hope entrances.

Who cares to doubt the tale, when told
That seers with second seeing
Behind the forms that all behold
Discern a spirit's being?

Past curtains keeping souls from sight,
  Who never found a friend there,
Transfigured by a purer light
  Than earthly suns could send there?

Who never felt an impulse true,
  A better self within him,
A spirit yearning to break through
  This life from which 't would win him,

Look through his frame and through each frame
  Of those about who love him,
Till soul met soul with joy the same
  As fills the heaven above him.

IX.

If in the spheres of life on high,
  The fadeless growth of each bright year
  Unfold but that whose germs are here,
What good do they gain on earth who die,
  And let the love of earth go by?

X.

I have seen that fair young maid once more;
  And out of a near, dear place,
I have watch'd, as if through an opening door,
  The soul that came to her face.

I have talk'd with her; and oft has it seem'd
As if I had known her long,
In a mystic realm of which I have dream'd,
In a realm where speech is all song.

At times, I have found no need of speech.
A simple wave of the hand,
A shrug, a look, so far would reach
That her soul could understand.

Before my lips had time to frame
The feeling that sprang to thought,
Up out of her own fair lips there came
The answer my soul had sought.

I have learn'd from her with a sweet surprise
How few are the words they need,
Whose dimples and wrinkles of cheeks and eyes
Write out what the soul can read.

But what has brought her, and who can she be
That reads me through and through,
With the eyes of a god that, turn'd on me,
Know all that ever I knew?

XI.

I have met her again, and again, and again;
And, whenever I meet her, my spirit then
Will leap into life, like a year on the wing,
When flying from winter it flutters in spring.

I have found her face in the crowded room;
And strange it arose as a rose in bloom
In the depth of a desert of rocks alone,
For I never saw then a charm but her own.

I have heard her words; and their tones would
float
Through the sounds about like a musical note,
More sweet than a bell when a port is nigh,
And the clouds hang low, or the winds are high.

I have walk'd with her; and my nerves have
sway'd
As if each were the chord of a harp she play'd,
And every pulse were a note to greet
The soft low beat of her firm young feet.

XII.

In the dusk of an evening, clear and still,
I climbed the path to her home on the hill.
So the sun withdrawn
Climbs up to a dawn,
When, just before it, the night gives way
And clouds are hanging like blossoms of light,
Presaging the fruit of the day.
At last, I stood with her home in sight.
Through the sky above me the clouds all white

Flew over the face
Of the fair full moon ;
And like them before me the curtains of lace
Drove to and fro
O'er the window low ;
And behind their folds I knew that soon
My soul should see
Her face that made life a delight to me.
But while, anon, I was lingering there,
As lightly, as if by fingers of air,
Was open'd the door
That I paus'd before,
And coming softly down from above,
And crossing a corridor clothed in white,
I saw my love,—
A form as pure as the moon's pure light
A form so pure that the night's dark air
Seem'd the robe most fitting for me to wear ;
And I shrank to my gloom, and left her there.
Yet, gazing back, for once, I aver
I had almost been content to have lost
My soul itself, nor begrudg'd the cost,
Had it brought me as near to her, as were
The soulless things that surrounded her.
My moods all seem to fit her own,
And without her seem so void, so lone,
I have learn'd to envy her senseless gown
That never knows it is bless'd,

Yet all day long moves up and down
With the laughing or sighing that heaves her breast,
And, clasping tight in its folds embraced
The neck so white, and the tender waist,
Keeps clinging close to the frame so sweet,
And fluttering in and out to meet
The dear, dear touch of the dainty feet.

XIII.

If only a moment I could but stand
And hold in my own her soft warm hand,
And under her rustling robe could hear
The breath that proved that her soul was near,
I never could ever have doubts again
That God can live in the frames of men.

And if I dared, while she stood so nigh,
Take one long look in her clear deep eye,
Then, though the power that within would shine,
Should strike me dead with its light divine,
To have seen one vision of life so sweet
Would have made my earthly life complete.

And if but once, as I grew more bold,
Her lips in the bowl of their beauty should mould
A word of love, or should seal my bliss
On lips that were burning to feel her kiss,
My spirit, I think, would bound so high,
'T would be translated nor need to die.

XIV.

O, if as my life began,
I had only bloom'd as a flower,
A smallest flower in a vine that ran
Beneath her feet, or climb'd to her bower,
She might have pluck'd me and held me tight
In her warm moist hand, or pour'd the light
Of her soul-bright eyes on my wondering view,
Till with love they had burn'd me through and through.
She might have lifted, and coil'd me there,
Caress'd by a tress of her trembling hair;
Or let me lie all day on her breast,
Where the lace-folds throb like nerves of the blest;
And then if aught I could be in that hour,
Or aught I could do with the life of a flower
Could add to the store of her charms, and make
Her form more fair for my poor sake,
My making her sweet life sweeter seem
Would bring me a bliss that I could not dream.

XV.

So little to her am I,
One man of a myriad men!
The eyes that I love go flashing by;
They take one look, nor look again,
And little they know, and less they ask
Of the soul beneath this fleshly mask.

Yet what if she saw my soul?
If indeed she saw so much,
She might see other souls, ay the whole
That is under all forms we touch;
And what have I more than others own,
To claim her love for myself alone?

Men may be best as they are;
Our bodies may lenses be
To focus a light with a source too far
For earth its rays to see;
And but for the finite forms we love
We never might know of the light above.

Yet at times I deem our souls
Are all of them born in pairs;
And a sweet unchangeable law controls
The love that each of them shares;
And she, could she only know my mind,
Might find a love, so deep, so kind!

I know that I might not seem,
As I stood disrobed of flesh,
The pure bright spirit that blesses her dream
Each night as it comes afresh;
But O, could she only know what I
Could be in my soul ere she pass'd me by!

I might not then seem whirl'd
From a star afar in space,
A stranger into a stranger-world,
To seek but find no face
To tender my soul a welcome home,
Where its inward wish would cease to roam.

XVI.

Two forms there are that I oft must meet ;
Two forms that I pass on a lonely street.
In a single path I see them wend ;
With one thought's weight I see them bend.
Brought face to face with whispers low
From breath to breath their secrets flow,
And, as if one stroke the sweet lines drew,
The smile of one is the smile of two.
Then oft, more swift than a flashing ray
Through rifting clouds at the dawn of day,
Through lifting lids a glance will fly,
All slight yet bright, from eye to eye ;
While like twin clouds one sunset flushes
One feeling fills them both with blushes.
Ah, can it be true that for him should be
What heaven must surely have meant for me ?

XVII.

How can she bear
His arrogant air ?—
As if, forsooth, it were fully shown

That God had given to him alone
Her cheeks that warm, her eyes that light
The whole world glowing to greet their sight?
What right has he
To press her hand,
And look at me,
As if to see
My flush that his deed has fann'd?
What right has he
To bend toward her, as if he thought
That the passionate blast of the breath he brought
Could add new glow
To the warmth below
The flush of a cheek that he leers at so?
Ah me, but I pity the race
If one with his beast of a face
Can win a woman like that,
By dancing attendance, and holding his hat,
And grinning and bowing to see her nod
As if he were playing the ape to her god.

XVIII.

I have met her alone in the street,
And the smile she smiled was all sweet,
But many a man has found such smiles
For him were merely wiles,—
Each line that allured him laughingly set
Like a cord that plays for prey in a net.

And what if over a net so fair
  The brightest eyes be beaming?
O who can know if there
  A friendly light be gleaming;
Or one like a torch on a hostile shore
That wreckers are waving where breakers roar?
Who knows if the tone that allures his choice
Be a seraph's or only a siren's voice,
Which, were he to heed it, his hope would be
Far safer lured to the stormiest sea?

XIX.

I would that the boy whom once I knew
  As I never can know another,
Had her own dark deep dear eyes look'd through,
  Or had been her earthly brother.

For I loved that boy, and the boy loved me
  With a love far deeper and purer
Than ever a love I deem could be
  If well'd from a source maturer.

We look'd in each other's eyes to see
  Our dearer selves reveal'd;
And nothing within each orb saw we
  Save too much love conceal'd.

We rested back in each other's arms,
And we heard each other's hearts,
With music far sweeter than ever the charms
That ever the world imparts.

For every throb in the blood of one
Would thrill through the other's veins,
And the joy of one dispel like a sun
The night of the other's pains.

Discordant never in smiles or sighs,
We wonder'd if it could be—
Oh God, to think we were then so wise!—
That others could love as we.

I would that the boy whom thus I knew
Had been of her kith and kin,
And had shared her earthly nature too
With that sweet soul within;

For if so, I now could be sure as then
That all of my hopes were true;
And my faith could join with another's again,
And joy in the strength of two.

And one would be the shelter'd tree
Whose roots resist the blast;
And one the fruitful vine would be
That lives to clasp it fast.

XX.

O could I only be sure
That the heart that I love loves me;
And my soul could dream its dream secure,
Nor awake to joys that flee!

O lips of mine, speak out
The love that is in you pent;
If not to solve the inward doubt,
To give the soul a vent!

When the heart is all aglow
With the flame of love's desire,
The inward fume must outward flow,
Or smother all the fire.

XXI.

And what if my love reject me?
The fault will not be mine,
Who have let the truth direct me,
And a motive that seems divine.

My arms may not be thrill'd
With the form they would enfold;
My empty heart may not be fill'd
With the love it had hoped to hold;

But I yet may be as bless'd
As the days that return to greet her,

And the quivering sod her feet have press'd,
  And the air her lips make sweeter ;

As the buds that bloom and the cheeks that blush
  Like shadows that cling around her,
As the stars that shine and the skies that flush,
  When dawn and eve have found her ;

Ay, ay, as blest as the angels are
  That over her pathway hover,
Whose heaven is truly sweeter far
  Because they feel they love her.

XXII.

I have seal'd my doom at last.
  With a wondrous power
  In a still sweet hour,
The secret my lips had held so fast
Burst forth, and, alas, my hopes are pass'd.
I told her about my soul's ideal
  That came from God, and was God to me ;
And which, in hopes that it might be real,
  I had search'd the world in vain to see,
Until with a strange and thrill'd surprise,
I had found what look'd through her own deep eyes,
And had watch'd like gestures from God the grace
Of her beckoning form; and at last could trace
  Through coursing hues that would come and go
Across the radiant veil of her face,
  The shade of her soul as it moved below.

And I told her, as truly as God had made
The earth and air not to sever,
Our lives were allied, and, if we obey'd
His law, would be one forever.

XXIII.

Alas, had the lightning suddenly flash'd
From the calm of a clear blue sky,
I had started less than I did, abash'd
By the strange cold light of her eye.
Yet whether amazed she were or griev'd,
My wonder could not know;
But her breast had not so calmly heav'd
If love had surg'd below.
Then why had her sweet smile lured me on,
I ask'd, as I took her hand, at last;
But her hand withdrew, and her face grew wan;
Her smile for me had pass'd.
Yet I hoped anew when deep in her frame
A tremulous breath I heard,
Till out of her lips a parting came
Where I waited a welcoming word.
She could not have meant to make me sadder,
But long, long after good-bye I bade her,
Behind me would flow
Like a note of woe
That parting word, as if what she had said
Were a wail of the wind in a night with the dead.

XXIV.

Of all the devils that ever have curst
This earth of ours I deem the worst
May be a duplex woman,
Whose airs are snares that none suspect,
And are spread where naught can souls protect
From ruin more than is human ;

Whose thoughts, when her lover is craving a soul
So pure he can yield to her the control
Of all his aims and actions,
Are weighing the worth of houses and rooms
And dresses and diamonds and horses and grooms
For which to sell her attractions.

A curse to her spirit that makes bright eyes
As blind as an owl's,—and with gaze as wise,—
To heaven's light sent to assist them.
A curse to her fangs from flesh so soft,
And her serpent-like grace, far crueller oft
Than aught ever stung to resist them.

XXV.

O stars of heaven so pure,
O buds of earth so sweet,
What souls can ever be sure,
When hues like yours they meet,
That they move to aught with thrilling breath
Except to danger and to death ?

O maiden eyes more pure,
O rose-red lips more sweet,
What hearts can ever be sure
That thrill with you to meet,
That aught awaits the panting breath
That does not lure true love to death?

XXVI.

She says I may call her friend. Ah me,
A sorry end
Has the lover-friend.
A place akin to a dog's has he,
Who, whenever her form may be spied,
Deems nothing so meet for him, or sweet
As to snuff the halo of dust at her feet,
And to crouch and bound and bark at her side,
And, trembling to feel the tap of her hand,
Be weary never
Of springing to fetch and carry whatever
Her face and her voice demand.
Full many a man has found to his cost
A master made of the maid he had lost.
Her lover turn'd friend is one to abuse
And cushion her sense of sovereignty,
A man to attend her, and flirt with, and use
To waken another to jealousy.—
Yet O, my soul, who else but ghouls
Turn heavenly love into earthly tools,

Or light by the glare of that sacred flame
A path that leads to a selfish aim?

XXVII.

No weak, half-hearted love can be
The noblest love, or the love for me.
The power supreme on the spirit's throne
If it reign at all, must reign alone.
What fills my soul with its claims divine,
Like God whose image it forms in mine,
Can never clasp to a full-thrill'd heart
A love that can only love in part.
The pulsing heat of my life's desire
Is the glowing light of a growing fire,
Whose flames in the form on which they fall
Must all be quench'd, or burn it all.

XXVIII.

Ah, did my love but love me well,
I scarce could need my love to tell;
Out through my every trembling tone
Would thrill through her the joy I own.

Ah, did my love but love me well,
Her soul would need one only spell,

My face would come, my voice would call,
And these would charm her, all in all.

XXIX.

The sun may fill with clouds the sky ;
  The moon may lift the tide,
And winds that blow from heaven wash high
  The wave-swept ocean side ;

But all the world keeps whirling round ;
  And always, while it hies,
Fair exhalations, heavenward bound,
  From mead and main arise.

The sun and moon and wind above
  Move not an unmoved sea ;
The heart that does not heave for love
  Will not be woo'd by me.

XXX.

Full well I know it is not wise
  Where sense like soul has merit,
To judge but by the spirit's eyes
  The world we now inherit.

But oft my soul has deem'd the light
  Attending dreams that cheer us,
A day's, to which this life is night,
  A day's unseen though near us.

Unseen by us, I dream of life,
That with our own has union,
And in the lulls of earthly strife
With ours can hold communion.

A life it is, whose charms forestall
The world's most rare relation,—
Our guardian spirit, consort, all
We need for every station.

A life it is that waits above
Our mortal forms here living;
And makes them instruments of love
Which it to man is giving.

For us, despite the claims of earth,
It forms the one thing real;
It brings us all that life is worth;
We call it our ideal.

It owns the face we dream about
To which our souls are mated;
And all we love in earth without,
Its impress has created.

Its features vague seem veil'd for us
In every phase of beauty;
And oft, through good embodied thus,
They woo our wills to duty.

They make us god-like whose delight
In forms and faces real
But springs to greet the image bright
Of this divine ideal.

XXXI.

Has fancy play'd the fool with me,
Who dream what heaven can do?
If heaven ruled love, no heart could be
Beloved and not love too.

May it be true that none can live
The life of which I dream,
And that earth alone has power to give
The joy I hold supreme?

If heaven indeed have naught to do
With love, then let my soul,
Accepting earth as its master too,
Play out the curse of its rôle;

Ay, play for a pawn without a soul—
Instead of a god-like queen—
For the grace of a crafty self-control,
Or a face like a painted screen.

If I win her, her gold for my pains may pay,
Or better, perhaps, her blood,

Or the sturdy, nervy, passionate way
  She lets her feelings flood ;

Or the strength that flows from a soulless mould
  May bring me a breed, to my cost,
Thick-skinn'd, thick-limb'd, with brawn that is bold
  In a world where love is lost.

All hell may hail their brawlings loud,
  Brute-headed, bull-necked, beast-eyed,—
A herd to make the devil proud
  Of the way God's wish is defied.

Accurs'd of God, and a curse to man,
  As have ever been all of their kin,
Whose lives have only fulfill'd a plan
  To thwart the spirit within.—

But am I to waive a life of truth
  For a lower wish that craves
The swine-flung husks that the world, forsooth,
  Slings those it has turn'd into slaves ?

Am I to yield the spirit's claim
  And grip what has come to thrust
The empty hide of a soulless frame
  At clutches of greed and lust ?

My spirit has pray'd for a spirit's love,
  And it would not barter this

For the whole world's dust, and lose above
Its right to a dower of bliss.

For if it were false, would one be sure,
When thrill'd and awed by love,
That all love is one and that ever when pure
It images God's above?

And if no love their lust control
Whom the rites of earth entice,
Alas for churches that prostitute soul,
And states that establish vice!

XXXII.

This world has ways where far we roam
From the purer light
That our souls deem bright,
And yet this world is now our home;

And planted here for some good cause
Like seed to grow
In a soil below,
The laws of our lives are worldly laws.

We cannot live the life on high,
We cannot be
In all things free,
Till the flower shall bloom and its fragrance fly.

Till then, hemm'd in from heaven by earth,
'T is ours to reach
For the good in each ;
Nor waive the higher for lower worth.

Nor have ever our paths been so well mark'd out
But that they show
Wherever we go,
What lures to faith and lures to doubt.

Yet if one clear truth have cross'd the world's brink,
This truth is clear,—
That all learn here
Less what to do, than how to think,

Less what they ought to gain or lose,
Or feel or say,
Than how to weigh
The worth of what they judge or choose.

And if spirit-life be a life in thought,
Thought must control
The reasoning soul
Before to the wisest life 't is brought ;

Thought here must learn to know and feel,
Yet choose the mean
'Twixt each extreme
Of dunce or dreamer, sloth or zeal.

Life's problem thus may all be solved,
If far above
Earth's truth or love
Heaven rates high reason's powers evolved.

For good can never be lost when sought;
But joy and pain
Both turn to gain,
If spirit-life be a life in thought.

XXXIII.

I pass'd a grove on a lowery day;
And out through the trees there rang
The deep clear note of a low sweet lay
Where a lonely night-bird sang.

I watch'd a cloud that floated away;
And it seem'd as if bearing along
A lark whose trills were filling the day
With an endless flood of song.

Then the sun burst forth; and the night-bird stopp'd;
And flew away to his rest;
And the lark to the ground in silence dropp'd
Where brightly shone his nest.

Ah, better I thought to sing in the gloom
Than never be stirr'd by the worth

Of a beauty that never can seem to bloom
Save over a darken'd earth.

And better, if like a lark, to soar
Than sink to the silent ground,
And tune the old sweet songs no more,
Because one's mate is found.

XXXIV.

My dear one has driven me off ; but I know
My heart is her's, and its love will show ;
And to find a way for this will give
My spirit an aim for which to live.
My lips will pour into every ear
The thought she has waked, and whoever shall hear,
While hearing an echo of life so fair,
Will dream and live in a fairer air.

My lips will pour into every brain
My thoughts of her, which there will remain,
Till its owner shall greet her form so sweet.
Then all I have said will seem so meet,
That whatever is o'er them will spring like a lid
To show her my thoughts that within lie hid.
Thus all between our souls will be,
Though never they dream of it, slaves to me,
And be made to share

In making her move in an echoing air
That fills her ways
With the praise I raise.

XXXV.

And what if her heart should then find sweet
The praise that her nature knows is meet?—
A flower may live in its own perfume,
And why not a maiden fresh in her bloom
In the sweet air shared by all the wise
Who follow like fringe her beauty's guise?
But will my dear one love me too
For lips that have given her only her due?
A fool may think that a passing glance,
Like a spark from a wheel, as he whirls in a dance,
A touch of his hand, a word, a sigh,
May win the heart that his form flits by.
But love is a boon, if wise one be,
Too dear to be won by a worthless plea.
Wise love has a spirit that craves to find
The inward mind,
A soul to its own soul so allied
That though no more
Of flesh two wore
Their souls would linger side by side.

XXXVI.

For the warmth and cheer to be bought with gold,
Where neither can ever regale them,

Men delve in the depths through damp and cold
Till body and spirit fail them.

To be leaders of men, who whip and rein
Those first in name and station,
Like beasts of burden in sweat and pain,
They drag the car of the nation.

For clod to stand on, and call their own,
For a flag of which to be prouder,
Like stubble that into the fire is thrown
They charge into shot and powder.

In hope of a heaven their fancies fill
So vaguely that wise men doubt them,
They cripple their joys on earth until
They have made a hell about them.

But whenever the good of all good comes,
That most is worth possessing,
The feast of which all these are crumbs,
The viand of which the dressing;

When comes true love that to gain, after all,
Is the one thing in life worth doing,
Men think it will yield to a beck or a call,
And does not need pursuing.

Ah, fools, as little of good we earn
By ease on earth as by sinning;

A love for which we are wise to yearn
Can only be won by the winning.

XXXVII.

My dear one has driven me off, but no,
She shall not thwart me so.
Without my planning, if ever we meet
In a crowded room, or a bustling street,
Though nothing of love my tongue can say,
My cheeks will blush
As the pale clouds flush
When comes the sun that has brought them day;
My stateliest bow
Will show her how,
O'ercome by a vision I find so sweet,
My whole frame longs to fall at her feet;
And if we formally clasp our hands,
Each tingling nerve
In my own will serve
With a touch to tell her my soul's demands;
And all my tones, whatever I say,
Will tremble and sing
Like the notes of a string
That rings in a harp that the angels play.
And who knows but, at last, sweet love may rise
Like a fount that wakes
In a rock that breaks,
And under each trembling lid,

Up-sparkle the spray to her bright dim eyes,
All loath to show
The secret that there I learn is hid?

XXXVIII.

My dear one has driven me off; but O
She must not thwart me so.
Her life's full destiny must she know,
When dower'd with mine own, as well, she stands
With doubled head and heart and hands.
Ah, could she but dream
How sweet it would seem
For me to give my life for her own,
To be her slave and that alone,
A willing slave,
Who all worth living in life would save,
Though I toil'd all day
In the weariest way,
If only at home could await me that rest,
More sweet than ever a seraph blest,
When, welcom'd for all that in me was best,
With wonder new, I bent to the grace
And infinite depth of her thrill'd embrace!

XXXIX.

I have wandered away to seek the street,
Where I know that oft will pass her feet;

And wonder'd if fate would bring to me
The form that I so long to see.

By naught I do, would I have it proved
That I seek her thus ; but if souls be moved
Like stars through their courses by God's decree,
Her life will surely move toward me.

I think she is coming, and trembling await
Her form afar like a herald of fate ;
My heart beats wildly ; alas, for me !
I await her vainly ; it is not she.

I think she is talking, the tone so clear
That my soul is awed that I dare to hear ;
And I turn for a greeting to be my own ;
She is not there, but I stand alone.

Alas, must I ever wandering go
Where shadows and echoes delude me so ?
How can one live a life ideal
Who fears that love can never be real ?

XL.

At last we have met ; and we paused and talked
In the old familiar way ;
And her words were kind ; and we turn'd and walk'd
Till the light had left the day.

We have found a work that we both can do;
And oft we meet to confer.
We are working for others, with others too;
But I, I work for her.

At times, we wait when the work is done;
For more that needs to be said;
If only to note that the evening sun
Is turning our skies to red.

There is most for us all to say, I think,
When the heart is least at ease.
The streams that leap the stoniest brink
Swell most the tale of the breeze.

And so we loiter, and let our words
Float off from their currents of care,
And echo about us, like songs of the birds
That trill through the evening air.

To sit by her side, as the light grows dim,
Oft fills this mind of mine
As a glass with wine; and it floods its brim
With a sparkle that seems divine.

Of what do we talk?—Of the goals of life,
The freedom and peace to be,
When the good shall always gain their strife
With truth as their only plea.

We talk of the world as it shall be, when
Men heed the spirit's call;
And the untold worth to bless them then,
When heaven shall rule them all.

We talk of the world as it is, that strives
With forms to hide the heart.
Were it made by us, forsooth, no lives,
When at one, would dwell apart.

Or, if nearer objects claim our view,
Our thought on ourselves may fall;
And our whims we dress, and undress too
Like a child at play with a doll.

Do we mention love? Oh, how should we dare?
For love one may only harm
By stripping its form of the mystery there,
Which is oft its holiest charm.

But I like to unfold to her all my plans
For the courage she makes me possess,
Like a warrior touch'd by a priestess's hands,
Foretelling a sure success.

For hours I linger, nor break the spell,
Till under the moon so bright
The great town-bell will ring like a knell,
For it bids us bid good-night.

XLI.

O search that was longest, O world that was wide,
O heart that was toss'd on a compassless tide,
Waves wild with commotion, ye hush into rest,
And there beyond lies the land of the blest.

O eyes that had watch'd for the form of delight,
O ears that had listen'd the long, long night,
O hands that had touch'd what dropp'd from you dead,
No looming delusion your faith had misled.

Nay, brighter than suns, love's own true beams
Are burning through mists that obscured them in dreams.
No cheeks of a phantom had e'er such a glow;
No eyes of a phantom such trust could show.

Come hither; lay hold of my spirit, O love,
That flutters its wings like a captive-dove.
Sweet pain, to be pierc'd by the shaft of thine eye!
Sweet prison, in thy warm clasp to lie!

Ah, dearest of dear ones, was ever a face
More fair than thine own in the holiest place?
My reverent spirit yields to the sight;
It yields as to God, where love is and light.

XLII.

To-night when the sun had sunk below
And the moonlight fill'd the sky,
Our hearts were beating like wings that would go
And glow with the stars on high.

O surely our souls had left the earth ;
For a vague and mystic light
Hung over our hopes, and hush'd our mirth,
And hid the world from sight.

I had touch'd her hand ; but my soul within
Felt not the flesh that I press'd ;
But the flow of currents it knew were akin
To the fair dear life of the blest.

And then it was all so easy, at last,
For me to say what I said ;
As her full bright eye she downward cast,
And turn'd from me her head.

She is mine, she is mine ; and the years may go ;
And the worlds may whirl where they will ;
But heaven is good ; and forever I know
Our hearts must have their fill.

XLIII.

Look up, my love, and let me see
Those eyes of thine gaze full on me.

One glimpse were heaven, although their light
Should blind me to each lesser sight.

What though their more than earthly fire
Should turn to flame my heart's desire ;
'T were sweet to let this life of mine
All burn to incense at thy shrine.

O could thy power thus make me thine,
'T would all my coarser self refine ;
For nothing would be left of me,
Save what should be a part of thee.

XLIV.

I half believe my senses err ;
For how can it ever be true
That her soul can see
Such charms in me
As have drawn my soul to her,
And have made one life of two ?

Can her eyes have ever beheld my frame,
Transfigur'd by a glow
From foot to face
Of beauty and grace,
As I see her ?—Yet the halo came,
Or she had not lov'd me so.

Does ever the slightest move of mine
With rhythm so fill the air,
That her veins all beat
With throbs more sweet,
Than if she were breathing a breeze divine,
And a god were passing there?

Can ever my flesh appear so fair,
And the blood so warm below
That the gentlest touch
Is all too much?—
Nor her tingling nerves can bear
The joys that through them flow?

Ah now, my frame, you are dear to me.
What else below or above
Could ever appear
So deeply dear?
What else could I wish to have or be?—
For ah, you have won her love.

O new-found bliss of an earthly birth;
This frame may be but sod;
But sod or soul
She loves the whole
That I am, nor another could have such worth;
I would rather be man than God.

XLV.

Ah, loved one, not the dullest nerve
In all this form I own
But would be thrill'd with bliss to serve
And toil for thee alone.
So, darling, put thy hand in mine,
And let me hear thee call me thine.

What canst thou do to seem more dear?—
Seem more to own me, soul and form;
Nor think they e'er can be too near
Thy heart that love keeps warm.
O darling, make my whole life be
One long sweet dream of pleasing thee.

XLVI.

What sigh is this, my trembling breast?
What wish does life deny thee?
These throbs, like wings that wait suppress'd,—
Ah whither would they hie thee?

Deep sighs of love, I know their quest,
And where they would be winging,
No dearer, sweeter, softer nest
Was ever the goal of singing.

There love, when it is all express'd,
These bands of thine will sever,

And life that moves to all things blest
Thy joy will free forever.

XLVII.

O wedding-day, thou flower most rare
Of all that burst from bulbs of night,
Lift o'er my eyes thy petals fair,
Nor shed for aye thy leaves of light,
Nor let them e'er decay.

O day, this coming air of thine
Intoxicates my soul with sweets,
Life-giving as the breeze divine
Through which the new-born angel greets
The dawn of endless day.

O day, thy clouds, though rain they bring,
Will float like birds athwart the sky,
At rest upon an idle wing,
Or pouring forth sweet songs on high
That shower with trills the way.

XLVIII.

The birds are waking ;
The dawn is breaking ;
The window lights grow clear ;
The east is gleaming ;

I am not dreaming ;
My wedding-day is here.

O what emotion,
Or what devotion
Can greet a joy so vast,
That comes to sever
My life forever
From all its lonely past ?

The church bell 's ringing
A crowd is bringing ;
And through the porch they pour.
We too are standing
Upon the landing
Before the wide church door.

Without revealing
A trace of feeling
In either smiles or sighs,
O what is under
The vague dim wonder
That fills her moveless eyes ?

Before the altar
She does not falter.
How calmly heaves her breast !
Her form is bowing,

Her lips are vowing
To make my whole life bless'd.

With friends around us
Our vows have bound us ;
New life has been begun.
Our hands are taken
And press'd and shaken ;
For love has made us one.

XLIX.

O darling, can it be this frame
Is mine in truth as well as name ?
My heart is trembling, love, to share,
And make thy trembling hope its care.

What is it brims these lips of thine ?
Is it a draft of wine divine ?
O surely never earthly gains
Could thrill so sweetly through the veins.

Come near me, love, for I would be
Forever still more near to thee ;
And while our lips and arms entwine
Let all I am or own be thine.

L.

When birds at morn are singing,
And wake me from my rest,
All heaven above me ringing
Seems echoed in my breast ;
Yet not to answer back the birds,
Nay, love, but thy warm touch and words,
Which truly bring the heaven to me
Because I wake to live with thee.

At noontime, when my labor
That toils from height to height
Has distanced many a neighbor,
And all my skies are bright ;
All, all seem nothing, till I find
Myself within thine arms entwined,
And thy dear lips assuring me
That all I gain is gain'd for thee.

When night falls dark and dreary,
Or loss has check'd anon
My powers that worn and weary
Refuse to labor on,
E'en then I ne'er can mourn the cost
Of toilsome days and labor lost,
While night and weariness to me
Bring dreams that all are fill'd with thee.

LI.

You ask me why I love my love.
Ah, think not love needs proving.
She sways me like the breeze above
That keeps the tree-top moving.

In her fair face I find a bloom
Life could not own without it,
Which, like a rose that sheds perfume,
Makes all earth sweet about it.

In her deep eyes I see a light
That turns her slightest glances
To beams that guide, like stars at night,
My life's dark fears and fancies.

Through her dear voice there sounds a charm
Past music's in attraction,
That bids all forms of ill disarm,
And nerves to noblest action.

She is of all life's hues the sun;
Nor whiter could a dove's be
Than hers to me, for all seem one,
Because all mean she loves me.

LII.

O friend, the heavens are kind to let no gleam
Of earth's rude sunlight wake our love's long dream,

Though we could find more rest in one caress
Than slumber ever brought to worn distress.

We know not how the seasons may transform
Our outward lives with sunshine or with storm,
But we have learn'd—in this our souls may rest—
To be at one in all things that are best.

Twin lives have we, both rooted in one soil,
And growing toward one hope for which we toil;
Twin lives have we, both branches of one vine,
And all that threatens thy life threatens mine.

Let love light all our pathway, till our days
Grow dark with shades of life's departing rays;
But O how brightly then shall heaven, at last,
Glow like a sunset o'er a loving past!

Fear not, O love, that in earth's gathering gloom
These cheeks of thine for me shall lose their bloom.
Fear not that all the tears that ease thy sighs
Shall dim for me the lustre of these eyes.

Nay, nay, as through all struggling manhood's prime
All sweetest scenes recall sweet childhood's time;
As all fair lands through which far wanderers roam
Are fond reminders of their distant home;

As all the race who rise to good from vice
Dream dreams about an old-time Paradise,

So, darling, all through all my life to me
Each new-found joy shall turn my thought to thee.

Our home may know no young sweet face or tone
To thrill my heart that heeds through each thine own;
Yet wheresoever love is roused in me,
Each form I love shall seem a part of thee.

No more can man or matron, maid or boy,
With coming charms excite my spirit's joy,
But these must find in thy fair form their birth,
But these must gain from thy dear life their worth.

The light of heaven has burn'd thine image where
My soul must evermore its impress bear.
Naught now can come to bless my spirit's view,
But, where it comes, thy smiling form stands too,

Nay more, my true one, thy soul's flowing love
Holds in its depths the imaged heavens above;
And when 't is quaffed, and floods my being's brim,
The draft fits God. I feel akin to Him.

Some day, O love, dark death will come to us;
But need not end our loving. Living thus,
Why should we mourn for life's dry leafless vine,
Who seek heaven's vintage, and have saved the wine?

We shall have liv'd and loved; nor all earth's pain
Can make us feel that we have liv'd in vain.
Life is no failure in which earthly love
Is grown and ripen'd for the world above.

NOTE SIXTH.

"Full many a time of old," the soldier said,
When on the following day the friends had met,
"Have I beheld the poet in his home,
So thrill'd when watching babes and wife so fair?
It form'd the centre of his joys and hopes,—
Almost the centre of the joys and hopes
Of all the busy town in which he dwelt.
Still preaching on the Sabbath, yet a man
Whose pen had won for him a wide renown,
And whose wise energy had brought him wealth,
In every house was famed his generous worth.
Though gray-beards might recall a former time
When many an indiscretion marr'd his youth,
None blamed him now for any earlier fault.
In all completed pictures of this life,
Dark tints but give the bright ones rare relief,
Defects in youth, because they are defects,
But prove more merit in the one who turns

His poor resources into rich results.
And far and near his wisdom too was famed.
How keen his insight ! and how deep he probed
Beneath all outward proof ; how far his views
Reach'd round the world, tho' ne'er a voyager !
For one may see this life and stay at home.
Between two walls imagination oft
Finds truth that world-wide travellers never know ;
Nor does it always make men wise, I deem,
That they have napp'd in Nice or roam'd in Rome.
But soon his life, thus anchor'd as it wished,
Was destin'd once again to beat the waves,
Where under wilder skies in darker night,
By tacking to the winds of circumstance,
He was to ride the storm out, and to come
Where only, it may be, the dreams of youth
Could find fulfilment in the deeds of age."

ERVING.

I.

Souls make their own surroundings, moving on
Through lights and shadows by their presence cast ;
And paths, with these all gone, seem changed anon,
When seen by those who trod them in the past.
This may be why my mind oft seeks to sever
Myself from scenes that once appear'd my all :
This may be why there seems to loom up ever
A figure not my own in paths I now recall.

II.

A man I see with blood and brain the kind
Earth terms eccentric, since it finds them few ;
As wise Chinese with half-hiss'd whispers mind
A heathen head to which they find no cue.
For far extremes his moods were always linking,—
The swiftest passions and the strongest will,
The maddest fancies and the sanest thinking,
A poet's ken and all a plodder's trust in drill.

III.

His broad desires in broadest fields would roam,
Where'er was worth his nature to attract.
While ignorance with him smiled and seem'd at home,
And wisdom would not know a trait he lack'd.
His mien, like water, imaged life around it;
And, chang'd by each new-comer's wish or whim,
A mirror to reflect whatever found it,
A man could read some men through what they saw in him,

IV.

And yet he played no mere time-server's part,
Nor waived old truth and friendship for the new.
Who judged he waived them would misjudge a heart
No more susceptive to them both, than true.
But traits like these, because not always blended,
Oft made his nature doubted and reviled;
Some deem'd them craft, and such their friendship ended;
Some deem'd them whims, and such would chide him like a child.

V.

When young, not few had found his ways too old;
When older, few had found them not too young

His friends for his reserve oft thought him cold ;
His foes thought all he knew was on his tongue.
Yet ever for a true demean ambitious,
His greatest virtue proved his greatest fault.
Oft men, adepts in vice, would deem him vicious.
Because no guile's discretion made his frankness halt.

VI.

While earth keeps training men to use device,
The souls too proud to use it or too pure,
Are sure to rouse at last from lips precise
The chidings of some wrong-reform'd ill-doer,
Whose former vice has foul'd the soul's emotion,
Who deems a sight of naked spirit sin,
And all love haunted by some carnal notion,
And so keeps out the Christ to keep the devil in.

VII.

Besides, broad views alone give men offense.
What tho' on life's wide sea loom stars and shoals,
Both theories for thought and facts for sense ?
Alas for those whose too well-balanced souls
Let not the aspect of but one view draw them !
Think you that men will yield to such their trust ?
Most men are curs, and let mere brute-will awe them
Far more than great-soul'd thought, however wise or just.

VIII.

Not long a philosophic, loving mind
Can well endure all dearth of sympathy.
To seek this kindly, and yet fail to find,
Makes lack of welcome seem hostility.
And this man's head and heart were so united,
His thought woke passion, and his passion thought.
His logic fired his fancy, when excited;
His fancy fann'd the forge wherein his logic wrought.

IX.

It wrought his woe, and this his reason knew.
He knew his own ideals made him sad.
He yet would rather sigh and urge the true,
Than smile and seem contented with the bad.
So oft within life's theatre of action,
He play'd the preacher, where men sought a clown;
And took a keen but morbid satisfaction
When those who only cared for pleasure hiss'd him down.

X.

Those modest plants that men term sensitive,
If unmolested, show no morbid traits.
It is the alien touch which strangers give
That shrinks their leaves to sharp and hostile states.

Thus find we often shrinking spirits wearing
Unfriendly mail, where aught their trust repels ;
But, when the doubt has pass'd, which caused this bearing,
Of what a genial life their loving welcome tells !

XI.

When men's misjudgments thus have made a man
Withdraw from them, nor longer care to live,
He oft is forced, as if by nature's plan,
To seek new friends, who, too, are sensitive.
In these, perchance, the soul may find its brothers ;
With these, perchance, can life again seem sweet,
For these, in seeking charity from others,
Have gain'd it, too, to give to those with whom they meet.

XII.

The man of whom we write, in time so met
An orphan teacher, homeless, pure, and fair,
A maiden toiling for her bread, who yet
Had willing hands in others' toil to share.
Though hard she wrought, her touch made all her labors
Like works of art ; and, bless'd with beauty's dower,

Although her garb was plainer than her neighbors',
Her face made this unmark'd as leaves beside a flower.

XIII.

In common walks of life the two had met;
And joined in common thought and common speech;
And, often, many a common good to get,
Had tender'd apt assistance each to each.
Placed side by side, their hands had touch'd and trembled,
Their eyes glanced at and through each other's eyes.
Behind the hands were hearts; nor had dissembled;
Behind the eyes were souls; there had been smiles and sighs.

XIV.

And then, anon, to him this maiden's frame,
One mote of many a million in the world,
More dear appear'd than all the gems that flame
In all the stars through all heaven's welkin whirl'd.
Thus thought the man; and she, the while he thought it,
Had found such strength within his frame of dust,
Which even winds could waste, that, ere he sought it,
Her soul, at rest with his, had felt unending trust.

XV.

And both were right. The world for every man
Holds but his own world, be it large or small.
Ay, both were right, fulfill'd but nature's plan,
Who in each other found their all in all.
The two were wed; and, soon, like love's own flowers,
Two babes the pair had doubled, and their care;
But babes in homes, like buds that bloom in bowers,
Keep out the sunlight but with hues that hold it there.

XVI.

More sweet than bursting buds and sprouting grain
That bring new life to view when spring draws near;
More bright than summer suns that gild the plain,
Ere autumn crowns with gold the old grown year;
More sweet, more bright to me appear the graces
That fill the spring of childhood's opening worth;
More sweet, more bright the smiles of kindly faces
That in the home make ripe the fruits of heaven on earth.

XVII.

What tho' the years that come with drought and frost
May bring disaster and may leave distress?

The parents' faith can look past harvests lost
To where the future shall the harm redress.
Their offspring whom their love is fondly training,
Show beauty in the bud, and promise more :
And if one season blast its best attaining,
Oh, has not early life long years of growth in store !

XVIII.

So storms that sweep where man in vain contends,
When forced unshelter'd through the earth to roam,
And trust in those who prove but fair-day friends,
Harm not the soul well wall'd within the home.
Let false friends go, when those of home stay near one,
Privations come that but deprive of ease,
No other loss can seem the most severe one ;
Nor other woe o'erwhelm one toiling still for these.

XIX.

Thus thought the man, and lived, until he found
The maid, once wooed by him, a matron grown,
With now a yielding nature, soft and round,
That cushion'd well all angles of his own.
The spirit which his hopes of old excited,
Had found at last the cradle of its rest

Where, like a child and lover both united,
He dreamt of love, yet woke and thought real love the best.

XX.

Yet deem not true all theories that extol
The choice of those who wed their opposites.
Where love flows freely forth from soul to soul
The channel from the one the other fits.
Nor say the traits of those without affection,
Because unlike, endow their children well:
One talent of which love has full direction
Finds heaven, while hate-led genius yet gropes near to hell.

XXI.

The truth is trite that earthly trust can wend
Two ways alone in which 't is ne'er beguil'd:
When, journeying with it, moves a like train'd friend,
Or, this impossible, an untrain'd child.
The man we write of, had found both together;
For life had brought him wife and children too.
With these contented, he cared scarcely whether
One more was true or false; indeed he scarcely knew.

XXII.

Years pass'd whose heavens had hardly held a cloud.
Then, all at once, disease that roam'd for prey

First made his pulse flee fever'd from the shroud,
Then clutch'd and check'd and chill'd it, where he lay.
Friends came and urged him, other aims displacing,
To court the favors of a foreign shore,
Assuring him that there the airs more bracing
Would kindle in his veins the healthful heat of yore.

XXIII.

At first he would not heed them. Life in him
Was rooted to his home; how could it thrive
Transplanted, ay, dissever'd, limb by limb,
From that which kept each inward power alive!—
Yet forced away, he gain'd from distant nations
Far wider views, and wiser ones perchance.
On earth men cannot choose their soul's relations,
But riding toward success must bridle circumstance.

XXIV.

He bade farewell then, with a vague regret
And dreamlike deeds and doubtfulness of fact,
To wharf—and wife—and son—and infant pet—
And long blue hills round which his vessel tackt;
Then pass'd through dizzy nights of phantom-fighting,
And days whose close meals clogg'd all appetite,

O'er seas where scarce one sail loom'd up, exciting
Monotony too dull to tire him or delight.

XXV.

Yet wrong I thee, thou wide and wave-swept sea,
And tireless wheels that whur so ceaselessly.
I wrong the skies that, bending down to thee,
Yet fail to compass thine immensity.
I wrong that mighty breast, whose endless grieving
Inspires the wild response of sailors' lays,
That bosom where omnipotence is breathing,
And wakes in distant isles the heathen's awe-struck praise.

XXVI.

Tremendous monarch of all elements
Whose broad arms clasp the heavens, their only peer,
What age of wrong, what wail of turbulence
First hail'd thee tyrant of our trembling sphere?
Who bade those winds arise and rouse thy laughter?
Those lightnings flash to fret thy fitful reign?
That menace fierce to peal in thunder after?
Those waves to howl and hiss at life o'erwhelm'd and slain?

XXVII.

Say power of dread, is it thy rage or joy
That hurls confusion o'er the vessel's way,
The while 't is toss'd as lightly as a toy,
Or cliff-like driven to sink beneath the spray?
Ah, when 't is dash'd along the dark fog under,
No eye can pierce the veil of instant doom,
Till hidden rock or ice with madden'd wonder
Roars at the rising foam,—man's ghost-track and his tomb.

XXVIII.

No human skill saves here; men work, men weep.
Why shouldst thou care, thou omnipresent sea?
The blasts that rave and clouds that round thee sweep
Owe substance, breath, existence,—all to thee.
They gain their grandeur, when thy waves are hoary;
And when, worn out, their wayward might would rest,
No rest they gain, till thou with pardoning glory
Dost gather all again on thy resentless breast.

XXIX.

Nor when fair skies or shores most beauty show,
Can they outrival thee, O, Lord-like deep!

Within, and yet not of, thy life below,
  On thy calm breast, they all in image sleep !
Ay, ay, the peace that follows thy restraining
  Of storms that rage to vent thy wrath sublime,
Crowns thee victorious, every power containing,
  Thou God in miniature, eternity in time.

XXX.

In vain, these thoughts ! or aught that spake content !
  Too slowly sail'd our friend those waters o'er,
Until one sunny morn their outlines bent
  On purple downs of Ireland's fertile shore.
That paradise beyond the ocean, dreary
  With endless restlessness of roll and spray,—
Could any dream relieve the eyelids weary
  More restful than the hills encircling Queenstown Bay !

XXXI.

Or where could fairer bands of fairies arm
  Than Spenser spied on those fair banks of Lee !
Or how could beauty bear one other charm
  Where Lake Killarney rock'd Kate Kearney's glee !
Rare isle !—but ah, were nature's gifts expended
  Ere here she reach'd the boons the soul demands ?

Or wast thou left by wealth and rank unfriended,
To make thy sons, fled hence, all friends of other lands?

XXXII.

Oh Ireland, Ireland, would some power divine
Could point the way to free thy peasantry
From all that fetters those proud souls of thine
In bonds of ignorance and poverty!
Yet still hope on! For thee, tho' progress falters,
The light shall come for which thy children pine,
Which long on other lands' less favor'd altars
Has fanned the brightest life from hearts less warm than thine.

XXXIII.

Past leaden Dublin and her silvery bay
The traveller trod the lowly banks of Ern;
Then dream'd in Londonderry of the day
When Walker's breath made hope extinguish'd burn;
Then climb'd the Giant's Causeway, thrill'd with thinking,
How round those cliffs like Coliseums grand,
Once o'er the ships of Spain's armada sinking,
His wave-swept organ roar'd its Irish reprimand!

XXXIV.

But who, that sought historic mounts and lakes,
Traced not fair Scotia's image o'er the wave,
Toward mounds and meads, where scarce a sunbeam breaks
But bounds the ground to star a patriot's grave?
Proud land, whose knees have knelt to tyrants never,
Whose clans of old have kept their children free,
Where thrives an earnest thought, a high endeavor,
That would not take delight, when face to face with thee?

XXXV.

Where dwell the pure who would not praise thy name?
Thy wrong at home precedence gives to worth,
And though in thy chill clime cold greets the flame,
Thy light, wherever borne, enlightens earth.
For this would truth forget false virtue's features.—
Awed still by thoughts of hallow'd Sabbath noons,
Ye beggars never doff the cant of preachers!
Nor squeeze through squeaking bagpipes, irreligious tunes!

XXXVI.

But who could here note all a stranger's thought
That springs to crowd each path where'er he turns,

While every scene with new suggestions fraught
Recalls a Scott or Wallace, Bruce or Burns?
He delved through Bannockburn; he mounted Stirling,
Where half-way up to heaven appear'd his view;
Then, coach-swept, through the cliff-walled Trosachs whirling
Came first upon Fitz-James, and then on Roderic Dhu.

XXXVII.

Nor did a force that seem'd enchantment fail
To draw him where the rills of Yarrow gleam;
Nor did an echo through its drowsy vale
Disturb that haunt of many a wizard-dream.
And not a tree beside its bank was leaning,
Nor by it there reclined a sheltering rock,
But veil'd for him a poet's mien and meaning,
From Newark's birchen bowers to bare St. Mary's Loch.

XXXVIII.

Then pass'd his feet to where he spied on high
Helvellyn's crest wise Wordsworth's haunts announce;
Where bright, susceptive lakes like mirrors vie
To swell the charms of else unrivall'd mounts;

And sudden brooklets, purling each a story,
Dash down each ledge, and dodge through every brake,
From peaks like broken fragments dropt from glory,
Whose heaven-trail'd clouds will not their sky-like cliffs forsake.

XXXIX.

And then—who could describe in lines of rhyme,
Nor circumscribe, the joy, so keen yet kind,
That England holds for souls of every clime,
Who honor aught that nobler makes the mind;
Where grand cathedrals throb with chorals breathing
Through forms of grace their life of gracious thought;
And ancient towers decay, with ivy wreathing
Fair forms of fresher art round all the ruin wrought.

XL.

Nor could mere words one's eager wish appease,
When striving to depict an English home,
Where no crude care intrudes on cultur'd ease,
And service vies but to exalt its own.
God bless thee long, our own land's mother-nation—
Most motherly when proud of England too!—

God bless that loyalty to each relation,
Inbred with British blood from lord to tenant through!

XLI.

Our land's descendants from thee ever boast
Of what they first imbibed upon thy knee,—
That stalwart Anglo-Saxon sense that most
In church and state keeps thought and action free;
Who fears a progress, charg'd with freedom's mission,
That gives to English genius broader scope?
Earth fears far more thy foe, whose politician
In tearing thy flag down may lower the whole world's hope.

XLII.

The snappish gales that fret the channel's waves
Whirr'd soon the traveller toward the Belgian shore;
Whose belfries peal each hour that labor craves
Full half an hour before the hour is o'er.
What thrift her fields evince! her art what beauty!
But would her strong, rough Rubens had but guess'd

The joy a wise man finds, as well as duty,
In making art portray fair nature at her best.

XLIII.

Of art he also found a heedful school,
As cleanly trimm'd as dikes that guard her farms,
Where crouching Holland makes the sea her tool,
Nor lets one breeze escape her windmills' arms.
This thorough race, what have they ever slighted?—
E'en in their church what tireless energy,
Where crowds, in chants monotonous united,
Praise Him who stretched their plains, in like monotony.

XLIV.

How vain is worship, when its grandeur calls
Regard away from heaven to human skill!
Far better level all our temples' walls
Than hide the thought of Him who rear'd the hill!
Ay, better hush the praise that stirs the senses,
Than have it drown the still small voice within;
And better have no church for our offenses
Than splendid rites that daze the soul made blind to sin.

XLV.

'T is grand to be, where plain strong spirits praise
Their Spirit-God in ways as plain and strong;

Ay, grand to be wherever life essays
To echo forth its best in sweetest song.
Our friend now found a land, where, ere their weaning,
The children clap their hands to classic airs,
And gray-hair'd sires, on canes or crutches leaning,
Hear no profounder truths than those which music bears.

XLVI.

There flows a genial force from things we see,
Which blends with subtlest currents of the mind,
And though it leaves each soul's expression free,
It forms the motive power that moves mankind.
It pleads in music, argues in suggestions ;
And bursts to passion in philosophy ;
In lieu of wielding arms, it merely questions ;
And in the world it thrives the most in Germany.

XLVII.

How blest her sons whose needs appear supplied,
When but the spirit's wants their lives possess ;
And, with its joyous freedom satisfied,
Scarce care for what the world would call success.
Whoe'er may seek for truth to make inventions
That strain all lore through lucre's well-filled sieve,

Their souls, content with having high intentions,
Rejoice in life because it seems a joy to live,—

XLVIII.

A joy to be a boy with endless hope,
A joy to be a man, mature and strong,
By day augmenting labor's widening scope,
By night at rest with "wife and wine and song."
Let others' thirst at once drain pleasure's glasses,
The German's lip first blows from his the foam,
And, ere to sip a second glass he passes,
The others doze in stupor, or reel raving home.

XLIX.

Yet who could not wish here for less that bars
The outward action from the inward thought;
And more humanity, and less hussars,
To further on the progress all have sought?
Who could not wish for faith and aspiration
More worldly scope?—for there were times, one reads,
When, not content with theories, the nation
Led all mankind to truth not more in dreams than deeds.

L.

Across the Alps, where press'd the Goth and Hun,
Long years ago, when Rome was in her prime,

Our pilgrim now was brought with monk and nun
To worship art—the one thing there sublime.
For there, in those days, hardly one dared mutter,
E'en in the gracious tones of Italy,
What later patriots lost their lives to utter,—
The call that made all heed the need of liberty.

LI.

The earth's Creator made this earth for man,
And promised heaven to those who used it right;
And heirs of heaven should follow none whose ban
Prevents their moving onward toward the light.
Why serve a king preventing this? or nation?
The patriot's home is where his duties be.
Why serve a church?—God's promise of salvation
Is not of peace on earth through fear of priests men see.

LII.

Away with all the forms in state or church
That aid the aristocracies of earth;
And make men rate the bad or good they search
By outward accidents of rank or birth.
Away with honoring spirit less than station,
And crowning men for blood, and not for brain;
With testing worth by garb or occupation:
And letting vice by might maintain itself, and reign.

LIII.

Would hope could prophesy this change for earth!
  But one there is that, like another Hun,
May prove a foe to many a work of worth,
  And out-Rome Rome, and crush all love has won.
Hail Russia, free! but if thou stay despotic,
  Hail Europe, when she prunes thine upstart-shoot,
An outgrowth, Asiatic and exotic,
  That can but bloom, alas, to bear a deadly fruit!

LIV.

But thou, our country's friend, and valor's own,
  O France, rash champion in all conquests new,
Who has not bow'd when daz'd before thy throne,
  Nor feared on it to find a tyrant too?
Top-wave, thou art, where flows our civilization;
  Thy white crest shows the wind that sweeps the sea,
A courtier's dress or country's devastation,
  Whate'er our fashions be, they all are set by thee.

LV.

And some are wise ones! Would all homes could own
  The courtesies that grace the Frenchman's pride.
Alas, our own forms oft repeat alone
  What apes and parrots might, as well, have tried.

Defects we have, but overdo confession
Who shroud our own home-life in foreign ways,
And, short of thought, intent on long expression,
Curve off to round in French each straight-aim'd
Saxon phrase.

LVI.

Forgive us, France, if fools or fashion-plates
Have made us rank thee foremost but in arts
Disguising well a world of worthless traits :
True worth hast thou within thy heart of hearts.
And hadst thou only wrought us works of beauty
Earth's unattractive forms to guise and glove,
Still beauty in this world ranks next to duty,
And those who make life lovely next to those who
love.

LVII.

But grander arts embodying grander thought
Amid thine architectural glories throng ;
And, where the painter's brush so well has wrought,
Thine orators have well denounced the wrong.
Let them as well renounce all wrong ambition,
Lest with some later revolution cursed
Their genius, like the lightning, fire its mission
By brilliant strokes that but make dire the gloom
they burst.

LVIII.

Thus mused and wrote the traveller, moving on,
And finding, stored in each new scene, new thought.
He pass'd through Spain, so beautiful, so wan,
Nor then forgot what Spain, of old, had wrought.
He climbed the glacier, and the high Alps o'er it.
He paused the sober vineyard's toil to see.
If wisdom came, let go what came before it:
'T is no aristocrat to need a pedigree.

LIX.

Yet oh, how dear thy sons, where'er they stray,
Hold thee, our own just Land, in memory!
Where every set and sect may have their say,
And worth alone insures nobility;
Where thrill the breasts of freedom's humble mothers,
Who feel their offspring have but God to serve,
And in the race they run with common brothers,
May win whatever crown of life their lives deserve.

LX.

But our republic here must bring to birth
A nobler man than ever lived before;
Or else from those who have not grown in worth
Will tyrants rise as they have risen of yore.

The home, the school, the church, where no crown trains one,
Must teach of reverence and of truth supreme,
Or many a will, not taught what best restrains one,
Will break the free land's peace and end the freeman's dream.

LXI.

Our wanderer's home was far ; yet this but drew
More frequent missives from his faithful wife,
In which her fancy marshall'd facts to view
Arrayed like hosts that range in fairy life.
Each week had brought them, till afar he wander'd
An unknown wild of Asia to explore,
Where news come not, but oft, as there he ponder'd,
Would hope forestall his joy to hear from home once more.

LXII.

Alas his hope but died as many do ;
For when, at last, the months had brought to hand
Those long-missed letters, lo, he finds them few ;
Then, while he reads them, scarce can understand
The news they bear of how his children languish ;
For both, he learns, " are sick—are dying—dead "—
Then blotting tears reveal their mother's anguish,
Who writes no more. " Yet God," he sighs, " is overhead ? "

LXIII.

Another note had come ; a friend of old
Of friendship wrote—and then, in words precise,
Advised, for reasons vaguely left untold,
His turning homeward—could he need advice ?—
He did turn homeward ; nor the wild commotion
Of waves that swept the sea from shore to shore,
And not the lone expanse of sky and ocean
Seem'd half as wild and lonely as the soul he bore.

LXIV.

At last the sea was cross'd ; he reach'd the land :
But oh, how changed was every object here
From when, a year before, each loving hand
Had waved farewell from off that fading pier !
None now were near to give his form a greeting.
He sought his home, but found it closed and still.
The door with hollow echoes mock'd his beating.
He seem'd a wretched thing ; and turned and left the sill.

LXV.

His house was built beside those lordly banks
That rise to greet the Hudson's glimmering train ;
Where man, as if to it were due his thanks,
Has decked with art its every hill and plain.

Below him flowed that rare and royal river,
So white with sails, and waveless tho' so wide,
And first of rivers destin'd to deliver
To steam and wheel the power to stem their currents' tide.

LXVI.

A place there was, not distant from his door,
Beneath an elm, far seen that region through,
Where with his babes he oft had sat of yore
And mused on life, and all the work to do.
To this his feet now turn'd—how sad our story !—
Above that place of joy the same tree waves,
But o'er three mounds, on which the frost lies hoary,
Where now his wife and children sleep in fresh-made graves.

LXVII.

And there in helpless misery did he stay
Until that wintry day grew chill and dim,
And anguish burst its aching bonds to pray,—
The only act those graves had left for him.
How oft, for all, the only vent for sorrow !
The only outlet that the soul can get
Through which to issue forth and seek a morrow,
Past earthly shadows where the sun can never set !

LXVIII.

And was he answered?—He remember'd soon
The things his friend, not seen yet, might unfold:
And sought him, and beneath the pale cold moon
Heard all his cautious tale, so softly told.
About his wife it was—how, sad and lonely
Without her babes, her mind at first gave way,
Then when her spirit cast a faint light only
Athwart the face it brighten'd, gently left the clay

LXIX.

Our wanderer heard; and soon again appears
Yet more a wanderer, journeying now toward naught;
Still young, if one must reckon life by years,
But old through woe that speeds the pace of thought.
Now scans he city crowds beside him thronging;
Now moves, a stranger through some village street;
Now haunts the churches with a fearful longing;
But none who hear his words appear his wants to meet.

LXX.

From east to west he went; from north to south;
Led there at last he scarcely cared for what.

A change was good, and from a stranger's mouth
A thought might fill the ebb of pangs forgot.
What courteous homes he saw his moods to lighten!
What patriarchal pride of blood he found!
But like a cloud a rainbow arch may brighten,
Beneath all lay the slave, in soul and body bound.

LXXI.

He left the south, and wander'd through the west,
Where, like some Eden's garden form'd anew,
The Mississippi's plains reward man's rest
With boons that elsewhere to his toil are due.
There sods are flower-beds, needing not a florist;
There every field a vale where moisture flows;
And every barren swamp, or cliff, or forest,
A mere mirage in clouds where labor finds no foes.

LXXII.

But in the east there lie sky-drifting hills.
Their cliffs, cloud-coursed in heights of mystery,
Dim dreamy glens, and flash'd surprise of rills,
Had train'd in youth his faith and fantasy.
He loved them, as a child may love his mother,
A simple child who cannot tell you why,
Yet something feels he feels not for another,
Too near the springs of life for question or reply.

LXXIII.

To these he oft would turn—yet not to rest ;
Nay, as the flush'd and fever'd blood will start
About the shot that rends a soldier's breast,
As if mere movement could remove the smart,
Unrest relieved his pain, each month revealing
A milder movement and a firmer eye ;
Not like a man's, who never had deep feeling,
But who has learn'd to meet expected grief, and die.

LXXIV.

Then some he saw in kindly accent spoke ;
And some appear'd to seek in him a friend.
And they were kind to cheer his heart with hope ;
But could they ever help him toward his end ?
Ah me, what was the wish his work inspiring ?
Could hills and plains the need he sought supply ?—
And though pursued with sinews never tiring,
Could ever that which always lured him on seem nigh ?

LXXV.

He sought he knew not what : he found mankind.
In all the regions where his feet would wend,
'T would thrill his heart in every sphere to find
How love reveal'd can always find a friend.

Who have not faults? who are not faults regretting?
Who wish not much? who ever gain their aim?
Who form not plans for all mankind's abetting?
And is not human nature in us all the same?

LXXVI.

Who search the world, most wonder there to see
How few the wonders are, where'er they stray.
Behold, the same fair children, wild with glee;
The same proud parent, watching where they play;
The same strong men, bent downward by life's troubles;
The same sad dames with tired eyes turn'd above;
The same small graves where drop life's bursted bubbles,
Made dark by fears of ill, and bright by hopes of love.

LXXVII.

Nor therefore view with heartless unconcern
Each special aim of manhood's general dust;
But fan each spark of ardor that may burn
In breasts that in their own soul's calling trust.
For though to reach their goals men from us sever,
Why, in their hearts, may not heave ceaselessly,

As in our own, an endless want that never
Can free those from ourselves who need our sympathy.

LXXVIII.

All woe is not the loud complaint that pleads
Where startled pity weeps in sad surprise ;
Nor bliss the gorgeous guise that decks the deeds
That win wide homage from admiring eyes.
Nay, one may weep, despite men's cheers too lonely,
Because his inward spirit stays unknown ;
And smile amid dispraise world-wide, if only
One other soul be wending heavenward with his own.

LXXIX.

A foe we meet upon a desert plain,
Where we who meet turn back to back, and part,
Is better than a friend who brings disdain
To greet the utterance of a trusting heart.
A slighter cloud above the Christ had hover'd
If men had made his flesh their only mark ;
His woe was love that felt love undiscover'd,
The Father's face withdrawn, and dying in the dark.

LXXX.

How many more must grieve like him and die
Before their inward love can be reveal'd

To those that judge but by the outward eye,
And cannot trust men's motives if conceal'd !
But let us hope, while knowledge still advances,
That men will learn to trust in manhood more ;
As trade that once crept on with lifted lances
Has learn'd, at last, unarm'd, to feed each hungry shore.

LXXXI.

When men learn all, and skies that dome earth here
Roll back to let the light of heaven stream through,
Grand truths may in the simplest things appear,
In outlines which before all mortals knew.
Let ancient lore trace man's ancestral story
To mystic loins of superhuman birth,
The grandest good in which our times would glory
Is merely to inherit, at the last, an earth,—

LXXXII.

An earth made perfect, where converting love
Makes each man share his heritage with each,
And prove his faith in heaven's pure life above
By bringing heaven within each mortal's reach.
For tho' a grander hope the soul confesses,
So long as human nature guides its aim,

Who learns to be a true man here, possesses
The most that He who made man what he is can claim.

LXXXIII.

And He who made man what he is—ah, me!
To make him what he should be, more and more,
May send the storms that sweep life's troubled sea
To bring from depths the gems that line the shore.
Oft spirits, rent within by grief and sighing,
Show each on whom their inward treasures pour
A wealth of worth that long has there been lying,
But not by one about them ever seen before.

LXXXIV.

And e'en full clouds may empty. Men meet woe
As moaning orchards meet an April blast:
Their wounded limbs that first sway to and fro
Are red with blossoms, when the storm has past.
So sometimes trouble keeps the feelings younger
Than ever joy could. Many souls they say,
Deprived of light, for simple sunbeams hunger,
And robb'd of rest, contract no mildew of decay.

LXXXV.

Then think not love is mortal, or can die.
No floods can flow but it has power to brave,

Too near in nature to the heaven on high,
To sink resistless in an earthly wave.
More strong than death, bereaved of loved ones living,
True love will aim anon for all men's good;
For this its thought, time, strength, and substance giving,—
Ah, could it find an aim sublimer, if it would?

LXXXVI.

So would you find him whom these lines recall,
Deem not his ways to mournful moods adjust,
Ah no, for shade no more than light will fall
On souls that still in God and man can trust.
To him who still has faith in generous action
Full many a thankful eye will love confess;
And many a hope that thrills life's nobler faction
On many a lip assure his life of sure success.

LXXXVII.

Because assured of this in life within,
He lives prepared to bless the life without.
It is within that love's warm springs begin,
Whose genial flow makes fertile all about.
For years this man to free the slaves had striven;
This aim had roused his efforts and his prayers;

And now for this he felt that God had given
All lessons earth had taught, and freedom from
its cares.

LXXXVIII.

With no home-ties, he wanders through the state,
And prophesies convulsion and reform
To those that feel they have not long to wait,
Who heed in him the mutterings of the storm.
He spends his years in pleading and in proving,—
And every year to more who mind his call,—
How life on earth toward life in heaven is moving,
And freedom is a gift that God will yet give all.

LXXXIX.

The days go by. He early toils and late;
And finds no time to give his grief a thought,
While hopes that loom about him, fair and great,
O'ershadow all the loss the years have brought.
And tho' no more his old home's forms and faces
Await him, when his feet no more can roam,
In every human form and face he traces
A likeness of the lost that makes each house a
home.

XC.

Here ends my story. Though, perchance, it seem
Too old a story, weigh it yet, until

You think, once more, what men, whom all esteem,
The same old story in their lives fulfil.
We know them now ; but ah, there is no knowing
The pain that gave their souls their second birth,
When fetters of the flesh fell deathward, showing
That love for all one's kind which makes a heaven of earth.

NOTE SEVENTH.

"Years pass'd," the soldier on the morrow said,
"In which the poet, waiving all things else,
With steps upon the threshold of old age,
Wrought on with all the ardor of a youth,
Who thus would free the bondman. Far his feet
Would journey through the land from town to town.
The trumpet-blast of truth his lips would blow,
Though courting oft maltreatment by his pleas,
Roused throngs, erelong, with whom he march'd unarm'd,
A champion of that love of man for man
Which cannot rest ere all have liberty.
At last, when old and new thought, ranged in sides,
Had brought the war that was inevitable,
Enlisting in the ranks he fought his way
From private soldier up to general.
Nor did the brave man leave that sea of war,
O'erswept by storms and strewn with many a wreck,

Before the waves roar'd only where the surf
Foretold the channels of the peaceful port.
And when, at last, throughout the land's extent
Men's hearts were beating wildly as the drums,
And shouts were echoing widely as the bells
That made the whole air vibrate with delight
Because of victory, assuring peace
That with it brought the freedom of the slave,
And made a nation of divided States,—
Then was it, when he saw his youth's ideals
And all the purpose of his age fulfill'd,—
Then was it that the poet, glad to drop
The sword and belt and soldier's uniform,
Once more with eager spirit seized his pen,
And wrote these lines amid the dawn of peace,
Not trembling softly in the doubtful dusk,
But soaring like the lark's lay, touching heaven."

ATCHING.

I.

Life I watch, like one at sunset, high upon some western hill,
Looking eastward while the sunbeams with their light the valleys fill.
He beholds a world of beauty, and its darkest shade is cast
By his own sun-girded shadow, stretching o'er it, vague and vast.
Life to me lies like his view there, when a storm has thunder'd by,
And the forests flash with raindrops, and a rainbow bends on high.
Brightly gleam the plains below him, where the golden rivers run ;
Brightly glow the clouds behind him, where in glory sets the sun;
And he knows night's curtain, falling o'er the little world he sees,

Falls away from heaven to show there worlds of
worlds whose light it frees.
Thus I watch the earth and air, and find that age
like youth is bright,
And life's eve and dawn, like day's, are flush'd the
most with heavenly light.

II.

What though day will soon forsake me, what though
death so near me draws?
I have seen my cause triumphant; nor was I its
only cause.
Truth may yet move on without me. What is one
that he should thrive?
Ah, though high he be in station, though he nobly
aim and strive,—
Yet the small man in his cottage and the great man
in his hall
Here fill equal spheres, the agents of the power at
work in all.

III.

Deem not this the power of evil:—Nay, the tri-
umph of the wrong
Brings too oft its own destruction; nor need men
await this long.

More is always brew'd in error than befogs the thinking mind.
That which moves the springs of action flows to action like in kind.
Wrong that thrives, becomes presumption ; plans to make the right retreat ;
Blows with madden'd lips the trumpet heralding its own defeat,
Blows, till righteous indignation hails its opportunity,
Glad to break a guilty peace, and crush its foe eternally.
Who, when arbitration once has been submitted to the sword,
Dare or care to shield the wrong from shot and shell against it pour'd ?
O, I hail the crackling barriers of expedient compromise.
Let them fall, nor more obstruct the pathways of the brave and wise.
O, I welcome shouts of war when men defend humanity :
They may die, but right will live, and God, and give the victory.

IV.

Oft, alas, for men and nations there are times that are not blest,

When the surface veils the substance, and o'er-looked is all the rest.
As men's lives are, so their thoughts are; groping in the dark they feel
Forms of flesh or robes that wrap them, and forget what both conceal.
Clouds hang low, and hide the sky, and make men think that heaven is low,
Till they kiss the dust, half hoping God is dust, and worshipt so.
Then because, indeed, they need it, clear as light, come proofs to show
How the breath of truth is keener than the bayonets of its foe;
How the gentlest words can waken consternation and despair;
Though they leave no track behind them; nor with shadows dim the air;
Do not glisten in the sunshine; do not thunder o'er the plain;
Do not flash the cannon's lightning; leave no smoke to shroud the slain;—
Words of truth, re-echoed like the words of Christ, that everywhere,
When they summon powers that lurk in forms possess'd of evil there,
Make them rend the form that held them, leave it writhing on the ground,

While their spirits fly to darkness and forgetfulness profound.

v.

E'en so now the heaven has triumph'd, while upon the earth beneath
Sprang and flash'd the sword long rusted, then made bright resought the sheath.
Friends, forgive this exultation. When the old man's joy appears,
Let the truth forever young rejuvenate his frosted years.
Think you mortals err in tracing tokens of a heavenly hand,
Where the bondman gains his freedom, and the freeman saves his land?
Or is then that cry, inspiring every nobler army's van,
"Liberty!" a cry that lies the while it stirs the heart of man?
Nay, I do not err; 't was wrong that led to Adam's curse and Cain's,
Craved a king, and cringed for Saul, and marched on Babylon in chains.
Those who war against oppression but fulfil the Lord's decree:
They but loose the heavy burden, letting souls oppress'd go free.

VI.

I am old ; my sleep is troubled ; and full oft my
daily thought,
Plunging into darkness, peoples all the night with
what it sought.
When my eyelids droop, my spirit finds a realm of
visions rare,
And my old age may be childish, but I watch and
wonder there.

VII.

Once I saw a mortal sailing toward a lone isle of
the sea,
Where, he thought, no other's will would check his
own that would be free.
First upon the shore he rested ; then, not born to
dwell alone,
Longing to be loved, his nature broke away from
reason's throne.
Howled the winds like witches' voices ; moved the
shades like ghostly forms,
While the leaves like footsteps rustled 'twixt the
thunders and the storms.
Till the cynic, far from manhood, all man's nobler
traits forgot,
Curst himself and earth and all things, rest or free-
dom finding not.

VIII.

Then I saw a wiser instinct, flowing forth unitedly,
Where were crowds that came together at the call of liberty,
Which, like thunder on the hillside, rousing rills from every spring,
When they dash to seas that madly o'er the rocks the breakers fling,
Roused, anon, a mass of mortals, who beneath a hissing tide,
Quench'd the flaming guns that bellow'd from a tyrant's tower defied.
Then anon the wrath subsided; but the mob, ere back it roll'd,
Had to havoc swept the good as well as bad that thrived of old.

IX.

Then said many: "Note and know now what a war of wills will bring,
Where no master-will controls them." "Long," they cried, "long live the king!"
Held they then to truth or error? Every well compounded lie
Mixes truth to please the truthful with the false to poison by.
Were they right or wrong, no people crown new kings like Saul, I see,

Till, made slaves by men, they fear them more than God who makes all free.

x.

O ye masters and oppressors, ye who flout what poets do,
Keen ye are, to treat as dreams the things these dreamers deem are true.
Dreams they are, forsooth, for men, when wide awake to gains of earth,
Selfish here and there suspicious, all assail each other's worth.
Each a tyrant where he dare be, crowds his neighbor from his path,
Whining then for laws to limit and restrain his neighbor's wrath,
Whining till he find a tyrant, who with acts that goad and bind,
Fitly bodies forth the tyrant whom he serves in his own mind.
All in vain men sign for freedom, heedless where its boons begin ;
Life is one ; and souls are never free without till free within.
Man himself it is that limits all the good that might be his,
He himself whose fears and failings hold him halting where he is.

XI.

Men must learn of wiser action ; all their aims must nobler be,
Love for all mankind must rule them, ere their laws can leave them free.
Only when the right impels them, will they cease their long complaints ;
Only love for every duty moves unconscious of restraints.
Only when no malice moves them can the fetters clank no more ;
Only love in every heart can open every prison-door.

XII.

Far above I saw a King, whose glory crown'd him like the sun,
While, more fair than stars, his people circled round the royal one.
Where they moved, as he directed, came no hint of hindrancy.
Every pathway opening outward led along unendingly.
There anon, full plenty waited, wells of joy that might be quaff'd,
While their depths with scarce a ripple, clos'd above each long deep draft.
And the people in the shadow far below that realm of light,

Crush'd by burdens, lying prostrate,—this was what had lured their sight ;
This was what, from every lip, had roused the cry for " Liberty,"
Right in deeming its possession would fulfil their destiny.

XIII.

Grand it is, to know that mortals, though their deeds appear their own,
When aroused in noblest effort never need to toil alone.
When athirst for good, we turn to springs that in the soul well high,
And within their depths reflected see a fairer earth and sky,
Grand it is to feel that visions making all our powers aspire,
Mirror oft the truth above us imaged thus to bless desire.
And if heaven, indeed, have moved us, when our spirit so is awed,
Infidelity to self is infidelity to God.

XIV.

In the soul's profoundest depth when all without is dim and still,
Oft a breath of inspiration lights a flame to guide the will ;

And the men who grope in darkness, where the gloom may lead astray,
By this flame aglow within them read some signals of the way ;
Nor pursue mere flash and shadow ; oft for those who still press on,
Outward light will dawn far brighter than the soul's it shines upon.
Then, when inward love is kindled and the outward doubts dissolve,
Safe within a mystic orbit doubly blest our souls revolve,
Safe in life's completed orbit, where from faith they move to sight,
From the truth within to truth that floods the cosmos with its light.
But, alas, outside the orbit only gloom and grief have sway.
Heaven preserve us all from straying, guide our wish and guide our way,
Join for us the lost connection, where all nature's currents blend
With the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

XV.

As in one life so in many : all are under one control.

All of history but fulfils the law that rules the single soul.
Times there were, near earth's beginning, when impell'd but from within,
Men but felt the good of goodness and the sinfulness of sin.
Then they learn'd of outward right, but still, too dull to probe its cause,
Wasted reverence on commandments and the holy text of laws;
Now the times, at last, are coming, when the soul in clearer light
Must amid unfolding learning serve the wisdom of the right.
God is Lord through independence. By and by we all shall see
How the truth that rules above can rule below, yet leave us free,
See through all earth's changing phases whence we come and where we wend,—
See the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

XVI.

Never yet an age progress'd, but something wrought there stronger still
In the power that swept it onward than was in human will.

Never yet a deep desire for light aroused a slumbering race,
But above the heaven was open'd, and the night to day gave place.
Thanks to God for nobler spirits whom the morning breezes wake,
When they bear the tidings forward, that the dawn begins to break ;
When they pierce the gloom of forests, and across the deserts roam,
Heralding the truth, enlightening every darkened human home.
But alas for thought and effort,—what are all their wisest words ?
What their proof to superstition ? what their eloquence to herds ?—
Oft for them amid the shadows lifting slowly one by one,
Doubt on empty nest sits brooding o'er the things that have been done.

XVII.

But the power that moves within them, moves without them too, and soon
All the world shall wake and watch the sun that journeys toward the noon.
Soon shall winds that leave the sky arouse the waves of every strand,

And the sails of friendly commerce hail the ports
of every land.
Soon shall throb the tramp of labor, and the whir
of work be wheel'd
Where a host of emigration camp on every vacant
field ;
Where shall wise men aid the unwise ; and as hand
to hand they toil,
Train, anon, the fruits of culture in their souls as
in the soil.
More and more the host advances, though but
lower gains it sought,
Bridging vales and felling forests for the paths of
love and thought,
Making earth a human frame, with ribs of steel and
nerves of wire,
Destin'd soon to thrill responsive at the touch of
one desire.
Learning, duty, love, are coming. Toil ye on,
aspiring souls,
On to where unroll before you, grander methods,
grander goals.
Comes a day in which the sun shall burn the mists
upon the hills,
Flame against the frozen summits, flash adown from
melting rills,
Thaw the whited wastes to verdure, flood the plains
and quicken dearth,

Rout the clouds and all between the man and heaven that gave him birth.

XVIII.

Now shall all men trust in manhood, knowing all must read the right
By the aid of that same spirit giving every soul its light,
Knowing earth was Eden till the pair that lived there tried to make
Gods of men, but only dwarf'd their heirs that curse at their mistake.
Now shall no man lord another. God will have His own sweet way,
His own Eden, where all souls may work their work and say their say.
Now shall those of all opinions all each other's truth descry,
While philosophy supported by what all who think supply,—
Pillars this, and pillars that side, grounded well, and high and wide,—
Shall a grander temple rear than all man's art could e'er provide,
Where the saint and sage together at the shrine of faith shall bend,
And the love that lights their life to all the ends of earth extend.

XIX.

Ay, when men desire the whole truth, each one's nature like a chart
Shall unfold to show what only all together can impart.
Till that time, though those about us vie to be the foes of truth,
Let it be its own defender ; they will learn in time, forsooth,
How much more may spring to light, where only wondering fancies teem,
Than where listlessness in stupor slumbers on without a dream ;
How much more may be discerned, where love too lightly waves distrust,
Than where mad intolerance gags a pleading doubt with naught discuss'd.
They will learn that wise men find that minds when trusted most, confess
Where are hid the springs of thought which he who moves them needs to press,
Learn that those who war with words must heed, ere crown'd with victory,
Both the right array'd against them, and the wrong ; for charity,
First in logic as in worship, leads the mind's triumphant train.
'T is the Christ, not Aristotle, holds the sceptre of the brain.

XX.

Now I see the day before me, when the pageantries of lies
Which have check'd the march of progress, melt as clouds in summer skies.
Come, divines, and seek the limits of a sect whose name ye call—
Feel for flying shades of darkness. Love has levell'd every wall.
Free in form but bound in feeling, slight in talk but strong in deed,
What the Lord has left to manhood, man has left outside his creed.
Statesmen, come and seek the boundaries of the land your people fear'd ;
Phantom-like the foes conjured there in the night, have disappear'd ;
Wealth, and rank, and honor, come, and seek the poor, the low, the base,—
Where are they ?—in all about you now the child of God ye face.
More and more give way the barriers : one in feeling, one in thought,
What remains to hinder aught that all aspiring souls have sought ?
What are plains and mounts and oceans, what are tongues to unity ?
Commerce, customs, institutions, have not all one destiny ?—

When the time shall come, a banner by the right
shall be unfurl'd,
Where the patriots of the nation shall be patriots of
the world ;
And the right shall triumph then in spite of selfish
men and strong,
Gog and Magog or the devil,—or conservers of the
wrong.

XXI.

When the time shall come, how blest the eyes that
spy it come shall be !
Just as blest are souls that, till then, war with
all the wrong they see,—
Souls that find their calmest living must be one
long struggle here
With the moulds that strain and shatter all that
nature's child holds dear.
It will need no simple proof to show that justice
due to each
Never can be gain'd, till each is free to claim his
due in speech ;
Or that kings behind their armies cannot guard the
rights of man
Better than the battling masses butcher'd for them
in the van.
It will need no nerveless effort to reverse that cruel
mill,

Where the wheels that run the ruling grind to
dust the people's will.
Long will those controlling nations fear, if learn-
ing be dispers'd,
Men who serve them like the brutes will learn to
know themselves accurst.
Long will those controlling labor, loving money
more than man,
Crush as grapes are crush'd for vintage all the
powers of all they can.
Long will sects of darker ages, darker made by
man's control,
Clog the growth of aim and action, save the form
and lose the soul.
Where, O where shall trust in truth that speaks
through manhood great and small,
Overcome the few's oppression by intrusting power
to all?

XXII.

Lo, there dawn'd a light about me and a vision in
my sleep
Rose above the midnight vapors, and it floated o'er
the deep:
In a shell like alabaster, by an unseen impulse
drawn,
There I saw three forms who journey'd softly as
the light of dawn.

Beautiful, the central figure stood with eyes upon
the sky,
As if fill'd with faith that surely heaven would all
her need supply.
Just above her unbound ringlets gleam'd as 't were
the morning star ;
And within her shining breastplate mirror'd lands
appear'd afar.
At her right hand, underneath her, crouch'd the
aged limbs of War ;
Yet he fiercely clutch'd his bow as when in youth
't was battled for,
Though his eyes were glaring backward, and seem'd
anger'd but to find
That the storms they sought had linger'd on the
shore they left behind.
At her right hand, peering forward, knelt the white-
robed form of Peace,
As a prince might kneel for crowning, or a serf for
his release ;
While against his brow his palm bent, shielding
from the light the glance
Of an eye whose pleas for patience were but prayers
for swift advance.
Thus I saw the forms, when, lo! more forms before
them suddenly
Sprang from sky and sea like hopes along a path
of prophecy.

'T was as if a grander people, wash'd of prejudice and pride,
Passed a newer, broader Jordan, rose upon a grander side.
'T was as if all earth had caught a glory flash'd on mount and isle ;
'T was as if the heaven had open'd, where all nations throng'd the while,
And a fresh wind rose that whisper'd : "Where shall man to man be true ?—
In the old world old ways triumph ; Freedom hies to seek the new."

XXIII.

"To the new." I caught the accents floating sweetly o'er the deep ;
And they thrill'd my dreaming spirit, so they woke me from my sleep.
Then I found me old and feeble, faint, with so much work to do ;—
"Ah," I moan'd, "all things that falter—what can thrive but in the new ?"

XXIV.

Ye, as well, with new hearts beating in the ranks of human life ;
Ye whose youth itself assures us good will still maintain the strife ;

Ye whose tread is recreation, and whose every
breath a joy,
Not exhausted yet in paths that earthly smoke and
dust annoy ;
Ye whose cheeks to flame-hue kindle, fired by all
the faith ye feel,
Not yet frosted by the winters that have chill'd
men's older zeal ;
Ye whose eyes are skies to spirits, whirl'd as worlds
from change to change,
Not yet check'd by disappointment, so ye dare not
test the strange ;
Ye whose wills ne'er cringed in failure nor surren-
dered flags of hope,
But can look for victory still in highest spheres, of
broadest scope ;
Do ye know how old age rallies when it hears
your bounding tread ?
How, in youth's endearing presence, all things else
beloved have fled ?
Angels even see I bending through this thick and
troubled air,—
But for you, so fresh from God, might earth and
heaven too both despair.

XXV.

Thanks to God, life moves on with you. Hope,
that no defeat will see,

Rushes past the line that falters, rousing thoughts
of what shall be.
So is hope triumphant ever. Life has had its fill of
pain ;
But the shade of melancholy clasped me to her
breast in vain ;
Phantom-film of mortal making, what could she to
hide the light ?—
Scarcely had I dared oppose her, ere her form had
fled from sight.
Never while these years are waiting for a nobler
worth in man,
While the strife for life continues, does the dark
hide all the van.
Howe'er thickly clouds may gather, howe'er fierce
the storm may be,
Even down the thunder's pathway trembles light
by which to see.
Let the thunder do its direst ; let the lightning
strike men dead ;
Still could hope look past the present, nor believe
all light had fled.

XXVI.

Watch the wise of all the ages ; there they linger
peacefully,
Peering off from earthly sorrow o'er a sea of
mystery.

All embark alone upon it, where there falls a fog-wrought screen,
Parting each from every neighbor, shrouding every dearest mien,
But in all the faith is bright that o'er the sea in regions blest,
Gardens wait of endless plenty, where an endless wish may rest.

XXVII.

O they know, when aspiration sweeps them onward through the sky,
That the outward life could never give the inward life the lie ;
Know no heaven would draw them on or give them power to heed its call,
If indeed the love and duty due to earth were all in all ;
Know no soul could ever tremble, touch'd as by an organ's key,
If the spirit's life that touch'd it were a life that could not be ;
Know no soul could dream a dream set free from all that flesh can bind,
If within were naught to vibrate, like to like and kind to kind.

XXVII.

Once I saw a pilgrim, treading o'er a thorny desert wide ;
And I saw his face grow brighter, as he dash'd his tears aside.
On and on, though stumbling often, with a gaze intent he sped,
While behind his path grew plainer from the blood his wounds had shed.
Then he fell, and sweetly fainting said he now no more would roam ;
And with smiles had left his body, sure the soul would journey home.
Ah, I felt a joy so cloudless must forebode a coming day,
At whose break like morning vapors all the shades of life give way.
Surely, surely, truth and justice rule the worlds ; and cares and pains
Which the martyr meekly suffers are not all that duty gains.
Grand desires are not delusions, though one die before his day ;
And the soul that plann'd for manhood fall a child amid his play.
Trembling through the dying whispers of the men who live for right
Comes a call to nobler living than the sleep of endless night.

XXIX.

Yes, I know full well of many, fill'd with doubts
that cannot pray,
Who would every aspiration check and silence with
a nay.
"Gaze," they say, "on scenes about you; earth is
green, and skies are blue;
In life's morning, ere you knew it, calmly rose the
sun to view;
Why should not the dusk of evening just as gently
steal the day?
Come, while noon is bright around us, let us dance
adown the way;
Hunt the fruit in arbors blushing; and be sure,
when sinks the eve,
That our patient mother Nature will our weary
limbs receive,
Nor less gently than she roused us on the dreamy
morn of life
Soothe our weary powers to slumber, dead to con-
sciousness or strife."

XXX.

Yet can thus our hope be stifled?—Where were we
that misty morn?
How much thought controlled our spirits on the
day when we were born?

If we own'd a mind at all then, how it slumbered, at the best!
But, to-day, it cannot slumber, though the body long for rest.
Down amid those grand reformers, mark that elder leader swoon,—
But the soul in him is mightier than when life was at its noon.
Just before his lifeless falling, lo, his words that rouse the brave
Make the troubled nations tremble. Sinks the soul within the grave?

XXXI.

Is the soul indeed but matter, welded, moulded, multiple,
White in snow and green in sunshine, by the storms dissolvable?
Or is it a lingering breath that, snared to work these lobes of clay,
Soon, like air that shapes the wind-cloud, passes through it and away?—
Who can know, or who will tell us?—All in vain we ask the sage.
Shall we ask the seer?—Alas, the seers have fled our later age.

XXXII.

O could we in our misgivings only see and hear once more

What our fathers thought so bless'd them, when the heavens unclosed of yore ;
Ere men's eyes intent on matter, minding not what o'er them towers,
Lost their spirit-sight, if not their right to know and use its powers ;
Ere men's wits were ground to tools more sharp than blades, but narrow too,
Plied at earth our day makes brighter but to hide the stars from view !
Is it wise,—belief so bounded as to let three hundred years
Of the faith of half of Europe give the lie to all the seers ?
Is it wise,—the mean ideal, whether form'd of man or God,
Deeming truth in all religions born and bred in conscious fraud ?
Is it wise,—the church, assuming mortals once could hear and see
Sounds and shapes from realms immortal, but that now this cannot be ?
Is it wise,—the coward science, which, when faith its aid requests,
Frighten'd still by Salem's witches, does not dare apply its tests ?
Witchcraft probed, might burst the bubble of the world's religious frauds,—

Showing seers themselves deceived, who deem all
power beyond them God's ;
And, with seers, the seers' disciples, who, with pride
of mind and will,
Fix belief, prohibit thought, and bid the truth, for-
sooth, stand still.
Powers beyond us may be finite ; nor can ever tell
or do
Aught that frees the mind that heeds them from its
need of reason too.

XXXIII.

Yet, though never mortal vision saw the spirits'
torches flame,
Or the white of robes etherial, rustling never when
they came ;
Never prest the hand so sacred from the sacred
work it plies ;
Never watch'd the light of heaven within those
peaceful soul-lit eyes ;
Never heard that distant music, which can hush the
seraph's wings
With the pathos all unconscious, which from earth
each memory brings ;
Though no saintly guest ere blest us down amid
these vales below ;
Or unveil'd for us that beauty which no eyes of
earth can know :

Still our souls would dream about it, still would
feel its endless charm,
Drawing all the good within us toward a life no ill
can harm.

XXXIV.

Thither thus may all be drawn, and find, at last,
that perfect Love,
Power, Truth, Wisdom, Justice, Beauty, throned
eternally above ;
Find the Mind that moves creation, Maker, Father,
Saviour, Lord.
Source and Sum and Destination, Life with which
all lives accord ;
Life of worlds that, whirl'd like sparks from shrines
amid infinity,
Spin through space till kindling glories light all
nights of mystery;
Life of seasons changing ever to reflect unchanging
power,
Whether flash'd from snowy summits or aglow
above the flower ;
Life of man, whose upright purpose, high aspiring
from the dust,
Looks above to find his aim, his inspiration and his
trust ;
Life of his life's under current, bearing all men do
or are,

Silent, swift, and broad and blesséd, toward the rest
that waits afar.
Thanks to God and adoration, that our minds
whose freedom hied
In the first vague dread of duty from the sway
they had not tried,
Ne'er can be, where'er they wander, free from that
divine control
Which attains its grandest glory in the good of
every soul;
Nor can find where life is darkest aught that wholly
hides from sight
Love amid the springs of being imaged in the
depths of right.
Thanks to God for inward light, the word, the truth,
the life to prize,
And the golden fruit of ages, hanging ripe before
our eyes;
And O grant, all ruling Spirit—and how blest are
spirits here
Who can feel Thine answer coming ere a word has
reach'd Thine ear—
From the minds of those who seek Thee, and rely
upon Thy might,
And on every loving token Thou hast sent them
through the night,
Draw aside all veils of darkness, till each watchful
eye may trace,

Clearer, nearer to its vision, outlines of Thy destin'd grace ;
Woo mankind to kindly feelings, lessen lust that love may be,
Cleanse of dross that every soul may grow an image bright of Thee.
Even so, O come, Thou Savior, spreading worth from man to man ;
Close the annals of confusion, draw the limits of Thy plan ;
Quickly come, O Holy Spirit, sanctify the waiting world ;
Bring the last grand resurrection ; from the earth, beneath men whirl'd,
Lift aspiring lives where from them all their sin and sorrow fall,
There to dwell in endless union with Thy Love, the All in All.

XXXV.

And for him whose watch yet lengthens, whatsoe'er reports be brought,
May he learn to wait and doubt not that the good will yet be wrought ;
Thankful for all forms of living, dreams or deeds, whate'er they be,
Which confirm a hope within him that his life may honor Thee.

Pardon him for ways unworthy, and for words that
are not wise,
And outweigh by contradiction all Thou canst not
authorize.
Guide him on, whate'er his fortune, that he may
not cease to do ;
And may trust in all his doing Thee alone to work
the true.
Bide with him when dangers deepen, shield him
from the tempter's test,
Looking not to earth beneath him but above for all
his rest,
Dreaming, daring, doubting, seeking, loving, serv-
ing, watching, then,
When shall come the great deliverance, may he join
the long Amen.

FINALE.

The reader ceased his reading, and the throng
Sat silent, till, at last, without a word,
The reader took the poems, folded them,
And placed them where they might be safely borne,
And rose to leave. Then all the people rose,
And press'd his hands, and tears were in their eyes,
And trembling were their tones that bade farewell;
Then he had mounted on his waiting steed;
And on the hills again the bars and stars
And buttons on his uniform of blue
Had flashed in sunlight, and he disappear'd.
Nor did he e'er return; for old was he,
And bound to many cares.

But after months
There came a volume; and within it, lo,
As by-gone glories of the summer's life
Rest focus'd and imprinted in warm hues

Of autumn leaves, so in this volume's leaves
Lay all the glory of the poet's life,
His imprint of the soul. Nor was it long,
Ere other volumes like this volume came;
And all were treasured with the choicest things
In all these village homes. The villagers
Had known the poet,—ay, and they had known
How through his poems he had always tried
To breathe the living spirit of the truth,
Conceiving that in all tales true to life,
Men read a lesson less from man than God.

So down to this day oft, in moments when
The stress of work is waived, perchance in hours
Of sickness or of sorrow, or when storms
Have block'd the roadways of accustom'd craft,
Or evening shadows hid the daily task,
And brought the cattle home, and shut the school
And shop and factory; when carts and plows
Are in their places, and the horses fed,
And stable-doors made fast, and dogs at watch;
When in the house the evening meal has pass'd,
The lamps been lighted, and the little folk
Been put to bed with that last prayer and kiss
Which hallows all their dreamland; when the wife
Takes up her sewing, and the maid draws forth
Her embroidery work, well folded to conceal
Her future gift from him for whom 't is wrought,—

Then often comes at last the poet's hour.
For then the book is open'd, leaf on leaf
Unfolding there like petals of a rose,
A southern rose far sent to northern vales
Not freed from fingers yet of frozen streams,—
A rose that with its odor brings a thought
Of bright blue skies, and trees deep-draped in green,
And air so thick with fragrant warmth that all
Its thrilling tissues quiver visibly
O'er flowers reflecting back the choicest rays
That sunlight showers upon them from above.—
Ah, like these thoughts more fragrant than itself,
Through which this rose recalls another world
Of beauty and delight beyond the haze
Of blue horizons walling our world in,
Come sweet suggestions opening with the leaves
That fill the poet's volume, widening all
The spirit's range of sight and sympathy,
And making e'en the humblest life appear
To be, indeed, the noble thing it is,
The while these village-people trace again
The course of one born humble as themselves,
Who yet attained the end of highest aims
As grand as any land or age e'er sought,
Because his plans when struggling toward the light
Emerged where freemen leave to God and heaven
The right to rule the spirit though on earth.

At times in silence is the volume read ;
At times aloud, by one who while he reads,
With cheeks aglow beside the brightest lamp,
Charms every listener, e'en the sage whose head
Will nod and dream, and then awake again ;
Nor find within the volume less to praise
Because it chiefly spell-bound holds the young.
In them the friction of the flying rhymes
Oft fires imagination to a glow,
Through which the spirit gazes on a world
That bright aureolas of circling thoughts
Robe in celestial beauty not its own,—
A world that makes men wistful, and inspires
A purpose in their souls to image forth
In their real life a life that is ideal.

With every Spring-time to that region comes
A day when all the people, far and near,
Recall the warfare waged in former years
That from disruption saved their native land,
Set free the bondman, and made liberty,
Throughout their country's length and breadth, supreme.
And ere that day comes, through the week before,
The wives whose husbands fell in that sad war,
The friends and sweethearts brooding o'er a loss
That oft is deepest when 't is least express'd,
The mothers mourning sons, and boys and girls,

Who think of their dead fathers as of forms
That fill'd the twilight of their childhood's dreams,
Are forming wreaths of all the greenest leaves,—
Of myrtle, ivy, arbor-vitæ, join'd
With all the fairest flowers the season yields.
The garden's tulip, pansy, peony,
Magnolia, honeysuckle, bleeding-heart,
Phlox, lilac, snowball, and wisteria,
The forest's bursting glories, chief and first
The dogwood, rill'd like mimic drifts of snow,
The blue-flag, waving welcomes from the marsh,
The lily of the pond and of the vale,
The daisy, violet, and buttercup,
The elder-berry and the bridle wreath,
From garden, grove or roadside—all are cull'd
And weaved in wreaths to deck the soldiers' graves.
At noon the church-bell rings, the organ peals,
The hymns and prayers ascend, the orator
Recalls once more the virtues of the past,
The privilege of the present; then the throng
Move slowly toward the place where sleep the dead,
And, bending o'er the graves of loved ones lost,
And o'er the graves of strangers who no more
Have friends they loved on earth to care for them,
Kind forms lay one by one their tributes down.
No soldier's tomb is pass'd and not enwreath'd
With flowers that rest there like embodiments
Of fragrant hopes and beautiful desires,

And make the grave no type of death's dark night,
But of the rosy dawn of life beyond.

And somehow with the service of that day
Has grown a custom kept from year to year,
That all, before they part, shall gather round
The modest grave where, when the old were young,
A few with pitying faces laid to rest
Our poet, dying as a stranger dies,
And buried like a man to be forgot.
About his grave some words he wrote are read,
As if betokening his own presence there,
And their communion with him ere they go.
And then, as homeward all the long line moves,
One wandering through that silent place will find
That not on grave of father, husband, son,
Or any kinsman, have the people shower'd
The most abounding tokens of their love.
More to them all than any one of these
Is he whose words, confined not by the grave,
Still cheer their thoughts, and guide them in their deeds,
And, oft repeated to each other, keep
As bright his memory as do stars by night
The light of suns that long have sunk to rest.

So lives the poet, though men see him not.
The seven poems, fitly phrased of old,

To sound forth life's full gamut, and recall
His rise from youth through manhood, stage by stage,
Cease not their music, but are ringing still.
His voice has join'd that choir invisible
Of seers and singers who have pass'd away,
Which oft, in moments when earth's din is hush'd,
Sends back o'er infinite depths a spirit's call,
Whose inspiration subtly wakes to life
Whatever welling from the soul may swell
The stream of truth that flows from each for all
Toward that far distant light where heavenly hues
Presage the dawning of the perfect day.

END.

PRESS NOTICES OF FORMER POETRY.

A New and Revised Edition of the Earlier Poems of the author of "A Life in Song" is in preparation. The following are some of the notices of the press which greeted their first appearance:

"New poetry worth welcoming. . . . in blank verse, rhythmical in its flow and deliciously choice in language. . . . a love story . . . told with a degree of spirit indicating a deep acquaintance with human nature, while there is throughout a tone that speaks plainly of a high realization of the divine purpose in life. . . . a tale that enlists the sympathies, while it tends to elevate the mind and quicken the heart to good impulses. Not the least charming characteristic of the poem is its richness in pen-and-ink pictures marked by rare beauty and presenting irresistibly that which the poet saw in his mind's eye. . . . We confidently promise that any one taking it up will enjoy the reading throughout, that is, if there is any poetry in him."—*Boston Evening Journal.*

"It may well find readers in abundance, both for the sake of the story, and for the sake of the many fine passages which it contains. . . . This work has one point of very high excellence, and it is this which makes it eminently a poem rather than merely a pretty story in verse . . . we have in this one thing—the conception of the character of Edith—the work of a genuine poet, we may say of a genuinely dramatic poet. . . . In Edith we have a thoroughly masculine intellect in a thoroughly feminine soul, not merely by the author's assertion but by actual exhibition. Every word that Edith speaks, every act that she does, is in accord with this conception. . . . It is sufficient, without doubt, to give life to a less worthy performance, and it proves beyond doubt that Mr. Raymond is the possessor of a poetic faculty which is worthy of the most careful and conscientious cultivation."—*N. Y. Evening Post.*

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ling in their novelty and brilliancy, are scattered in profusion, but we look in vain for the slightest token of a disposition wantonly to play with language, or to shock the reader into attention by the use of mongrel compounds or strange concatenations. He is a thorough master of English verse. . . . 'Whatever the Mission of Life may be,' is strong in masculine thought, tersely expressed, and is a better presentation of the same subject than Tennyson's famous sonnet 'To J. M. K.'"—*American Presbyterian Review.*

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